EAGLE TIMES

The quarterly journal of the Eagle Society

Vol. 17 No. 3 Autumn 2004

Geoffrey Bond's

The Phantom Riders

Eagle Times

Vol 18 No 3

Autumn 2004

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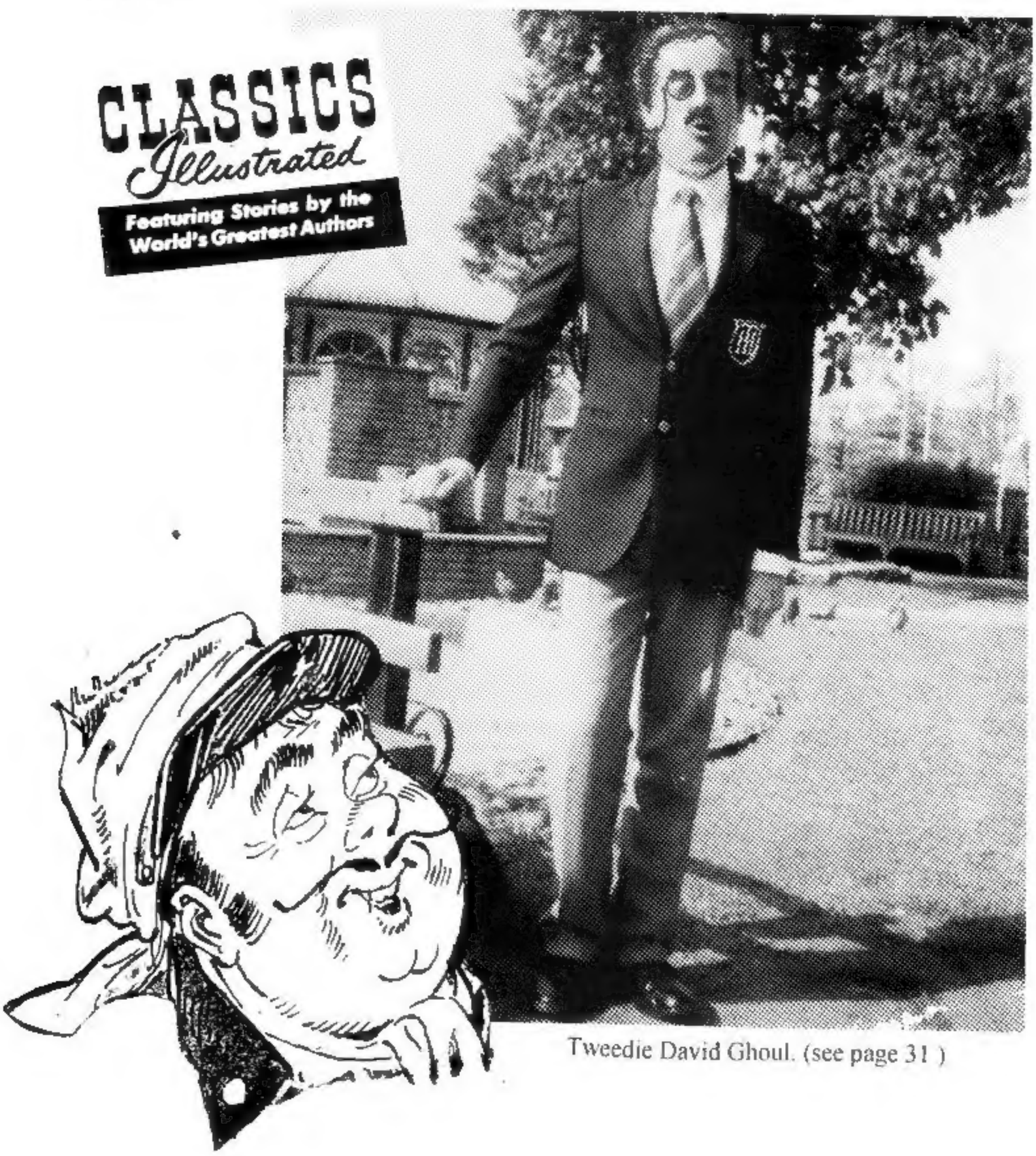
CONTENTS

1. Editorial
2. Phantom Riders
8. John Burns
12. Classics Illustrated
18. Wallis Rigby
21. Pirates. Part 2
24. French Uniforms in Jack O' Lantern.
29. Curly Bill / Looks Familiar.
30. Harris Tweedies
32. Val and Charles.
34. Case of Squeaking Bear. Part 2.
39. Eagle on the web.
40. Eagle coupon / Who's Who
41. Gerald Palmer / Part 2.
48. Titan Dan Dare.
50. Anthony Buckeridge.
52. Postbag



Tweedie David Ghoul. (see page 31)

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The quarterly journal
of the Eagle Society.

The Eagle Society is dedicated to the memory of Britain's National picture strip Weekly - Eagle.

Hello Again,

In this issue we feature "Luck of the Legion", a character whose adventures ran for nine years in ***Eagle*** *(1952-61) . The strip would have lasted longer had Geoffrey Bond had his way but when he submitted the synopsis of the story to follow "Mark of the Monster" in '61, to* ***Eagle's*** *new management, he was told that his services, along with all the other established artists and writers, were no longer wanted! Geoffrey has now given E.T. that synopsis and we present it as it was submitted just over forty years ago. Something else that he gave us were two colour prints of French editions of his Luck novels.*

Even more colotir in this issue! In our colour section we feature an interview with John Burns and for this we have to thank Stephen Law. Stephen also sent in an interview with someone we have been trying to locate for some time and that's Gerry Haylock. This interview will appear in the Christmas issue. Other coloured items include "Classics Illustrated", thanks to Nigel McMurray and Adrian Perkins's second part of the Gerald Palmer article.

Speaking of Nigel McMurray and Gerald Palmer brings us nicely to next year's social events. As Gerald has said he could visit a club dinner in September we have decided to have the 2005 club weekend at the Green Pastures Retreat in Bournemouth on the weekend of September 2nd,3rd, and 4th. This will tie in very well with Nigel's planned " Lawrence of Arabia " theme weekend and will give the Dan Dare fans something to look forward to. Seventy percent of the retreat has en suite rooms so if you would like a single, double or twin room please send in a deposit and secure one (details in our supplement). There are only thirty places!

Bob Rothwell , the man behind many successful ***Eagle*** *Days, has agreed to put on another* ***Eagle*** *Day for us in April of next year so watch our supplement for further details.*

In April of this year, Howard Corn sent Keith Howard a package of letters and items for "Postbag". It took our postal service ***TWO MONTHS*** *to deliver them so some of this issue's letters should have been in the Summer magazine. Alan Vince's letter was in the lost package but Alan kindly rewrote it in time for inclusion in the Summer issue.*

Hope you enjoy our efforts.

Best Wishes

" The Team"

The following "Luck of the Legion" story was written as a synopsis by Geoffrey Bond in 1961. It was to be submitted to the Eagle Management as the story to follow "The Mark of the Monster" that finished in Eagle in September of that year. However, by September, when the story ended in 1961, management changes had taken place at Hulton House and Geoffrey found himself, along with many other contributors, not wanted on Eagle.

Geoffrey has asked that the story be presented in synopsis form to give readers a chance to see how stories were presented for consideration by the Eagle editors.

The story has never before been published and we are grateful to Geoffrey for allowing us to print it at last.

Luck of the Legion Story Synopsis.

"The Phantom Riders"

Legion headquarters receive news that a certain weird phenomenon in the shape of a phantom caravan is frightening the superstitious inhabitants of a southern Sahara village.

Luck and Co, with an armed patrol, are sent out to investigate, but on the way suffer a surprise attack from unseen raiders in the foothills.

They manage to beat the enemy off, but Luck notices with some apprehension that the men – whoever they were – have been using the latest machine guns and ammunition. Where have they been obtaining these things from?

They are distracted from their objective by hearing a distant bugle sound the alarm, and hasten to a legion fort which has been surrounded by hostile tribesmen.

After a hectic skirmish and surprise attack the raiders are driven off, and the patrol enters the fort, where Luck tells the C.O. what happened to his men, and relating the mystery armaments.

Later, after dark, the trio slip out of the fort and make for the village where the ghostly caravan is supposed to materialise. In this way the enemy will think that they still hold all the legionnaires captive inside the fort, and by hiding during the day the trio are able to scout out the ground and see any strange happenings for themselves.

They make friends with a young Arab boy and learn that the phantom caravan passes right through the village twice in each moon – and on those nights the people barricade themselves

They make friends with a young Arab boy and learn that...

indoors, for sight of the ghostly riders is said to bring instant death.

Before long the three legionnaires see the caravan for themselves – a line of white camels, astride which sit strangely silent men. Bimberg, determined to solve the mystery, shoots at one rider, but the bullet passes right through and the caravan moves on its phantom way.

Next time the caravan is due to make its appearance they watch again – and now follows it out of the village and across the desert – where it looks to disappear through a solid wall of rock by a mountain pass!

Luck sends his friends back for reinforcements, and makes a little investigation of his own next day. He finds that a cleverly concealed door has been built into the rock and knows that though the caravan disappeared inside the mountain no one has yet come out...

The sergeant decides to have his men force an entry, knowing that whatever they find on the other side it will be nothing so weird as the "spooks" would like them to believe.

They batter the door down, and immediately launch into an attack on the surprised warriors who are resting inside the mountain, preparing to issue the arms which have been smuggled by the

...the Phantom Riders caravan passes through twice in each moon.

caravan from the tiny coastal village where they have been unshipped.

All this Luck learns after they have beaten the enemy in the fight for the magazine...

It explains the sudden uprising of raiders against the desert forts, and also their excellent armaments, but Luck is still determined to capture the ringleader of the plot, for the renegades are clearly only acting on instructions from some higher power.

The prisoners are sent back to the fort, and Sergeant Luck hatches a counter plot. He prepares to march back to the tiny village where the ammo is being landed – arriving there late at night , with uniforms luminous with phosphorescent paint.

This the trio do, scaring the villagers out of their wits, as they think that the soldiers are ghosts of the renegades' victims!

The smugglers refuse to take any more arms, and an entire village, which is involved up to the hilt, tries to escape during the darkness – but only run into an encircling battalion of the legion who have been waiting for such a happening.

A last big fight takes place in and around the rocky coast , and finally the ring-leader is caught, proving to be the village head-man, a rank coward who is organising the scheme, but carefully kept out of the danger zone.

So the phantom caravan has made its last journey, the attacks on the Legion posts have been quelled, and the arms smugglers broken up for good and all.

Author's note:

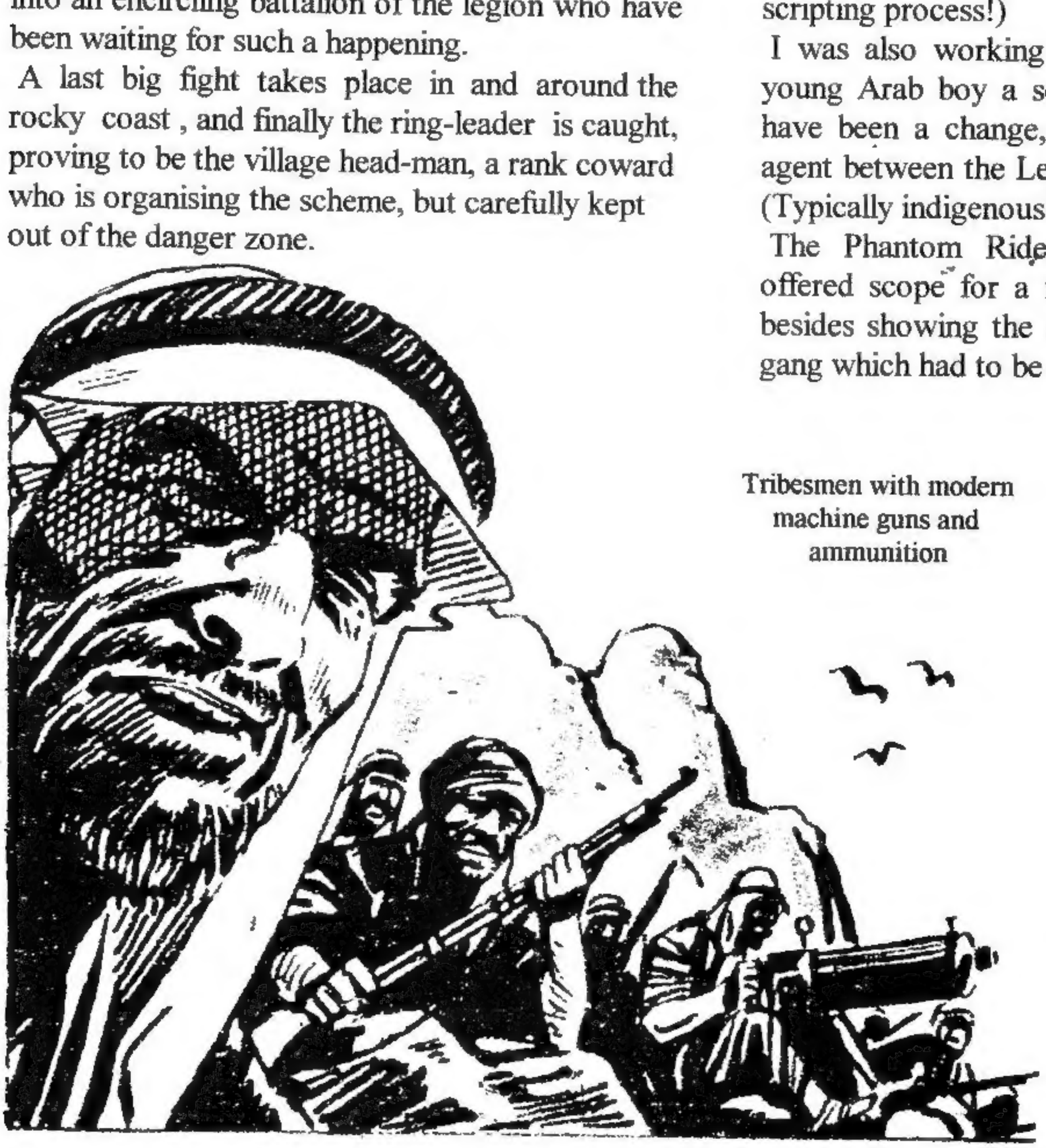
I initially had the idea of the main villager in this serial being known by the name of 'The Phantom" and flitting in and out of the story, but not necessarily taking part in many of the incidents. A master mind, in fact, organising the gangs of arms smugglers.

In this case he would have been finally caught and unmasked by Sergeant Luck- and discovered to be the Legion's old arch-enemy… Selem Raschid!

However, I did not develop this line of thought as I felt that the very name "The Phantom" would be too banal in itself and had been used in other similar stories elsewhere. The group name of "The Phantom Riders" was more original (though I could have changed my mind during the final scripting process!)

I was also working on the idea of making the young Arab boy a secondary hero, which might have been a change, acting as a sort of double agent between the Legionnaires and his own tribe (Typically indigenous!)

The Phantom Riders themselves would have offered scope for a few more secondary villains besides showing the strength of a well organised gang which had to be broken.



Tribesmen with modern machine guns and ammunition

Art. Martin Aitchison

LUCK OF THE LEGION Story synopsis.

" THE PHANTOM ~~CARAVAN~~ RIDERS. "

-oOo-

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-oOo-

The synopsis was originally on two quarto pages

On the following two pages we show the covers of two French editions of "Luck" Novels. ▷

la garnison fantôme

Geoffrey Bond

les Tigres de Chaï-Fang

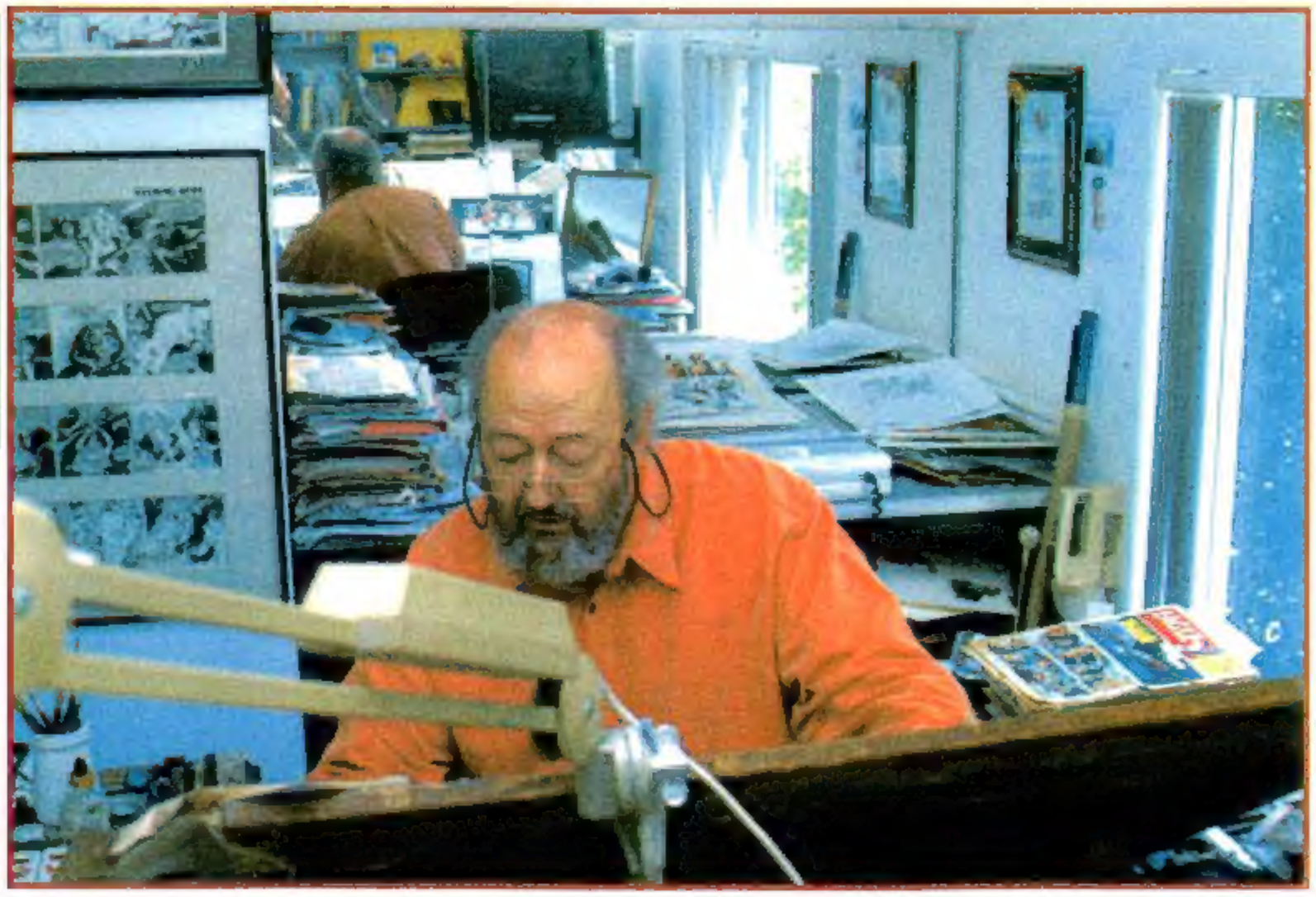
Geoffrey BOND

COLLECTION SIGNE DE PISTE

JOHN BURNS INTERVIEW

by

Stephen Law



John M. Burns in his studio, 2003

There are few comic artists still working in Britain today who could be considered to be in the same league as the masters of the medium: Hampson, Bellamy, Embleton and Lawrence. One such artist however is John M. Burns.

With a career stretching back forty years, five major awards and having worked for most, if not all, the major publishing houses, with spells on *EAGLE, TV21* etc., John Burns can be regarded as one of the best comic-artists around today. He has worked on comic strips in the British, European and American styles - not forgetting newspaper cartoon-strips - in black and white, coloured and fully painted formats.

***SL:** Where and when were you born and how did your interest in comics and art begin?*

JMB: Wickford, Essex, 1938. When I passed my 13-plus exam, having failed my 11-plus, and went to North Westham County Tech. - which concentrated on art or commerce - needless to say, I chose art. Comics came a couple of years later at the same school.

***SL:** Did you read comics as a child and did they have any influence on you?*

JMB: No!

***SL:** How did your interest in the field develop in terms of schooling, training etc? Did you intend to work in comics or did it just happen that way?*

JMB: In 1954, I went for a job interview at Link Studios, which specialised in producing comic strips for A.P. (Amalgamated Press.) They were an agency that let desk-space to freelance artists that they represented - at 16 I was the boy to an older boy who had actually gone to the same school as myself. The artist ahead of him was Harry Lindfield and ahead of Harry was Gerry Haylock - the boy ahead of me left and so that left myself and Harry Lindfield. Just prior to my joining the studio to start my apprenticeship, Gerry Haylock had left so I never got to meet him - however later, in the early seventies, we all three worked (at the same time) on *Countdown*, published by Polystyle. During my 4-year apprenticeship I attended night school at St. Martin's School of Art, taking life drawing and life painting. Weekends I was drawing in South Kensington museums and the British Museum, as well as doing small jobs at home for the studio - a busy 4 years!

***SL:** Who, or what, is your main influence art-wise and are you interested in other forms of art?*

JMB: Apart from the American magazine illustrators such as Austin Briggs, Robert Fawcett, Joe Bowler, Len Riley and Dana Gibson, James Montgomery Flagg, etc. Strip artists? American again - Alex Raymond, Stan Drake; later some of the Italian and Spanish artists. I also quite like a few fine artists; I'll not list them.

***SL:** You worked on 'Wulf the Briton' for Express Weekly in 1961. Were you involved in the writing and did you meet Ron Embleton?*

OUT IN SPACE AND ON COURSE FOR MARS... GRANT TWO, FELIX FOUR AND CARLO BERRETTI, DRIFT IN TO SPACE WAY ONE...
WE'RE LESS THAN TWENTY THOUSAND KILOMETRES FROM THE MAIN ROUTE, GRANT.
AND NO VISIBLE TRACKS.
WHEN SHOULD WE SEE THAT CARGO SHIP, GRANT?
IF EARTH HASN'T SUDDENLY CHANGED ITS SCHEDULES, WE SHOULD GET A SIGHTING IN FORTY THREE MINUTES.

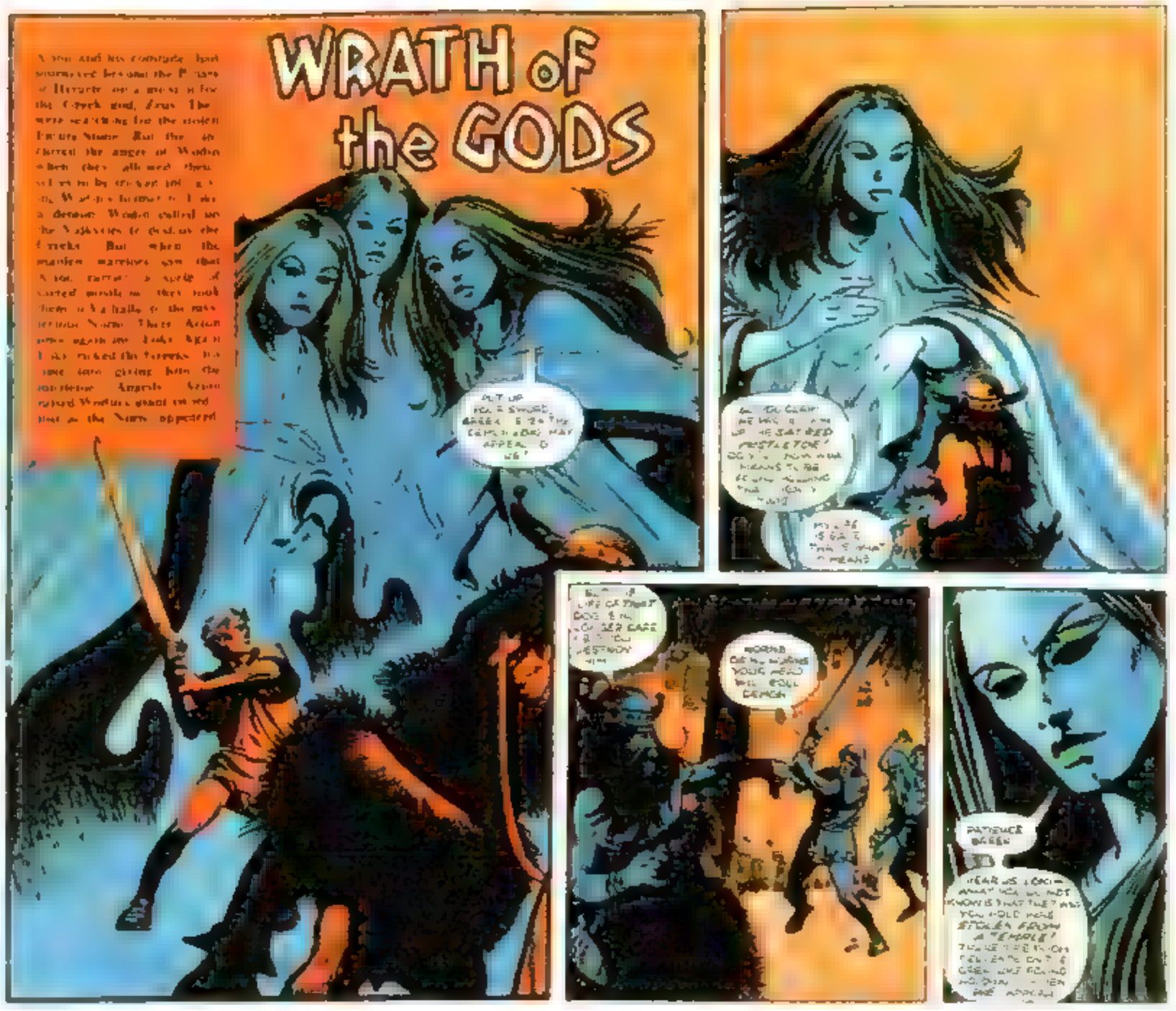
'Countdown' - in the comic of the same name!

JMB: I try not to get involved in writing the scripts. I stick to what I do best. At the time I never met Ron. Later on we met through the Society of Strip Illustrators (SSI).

SL: *You also worked on 'Wuthering Heights' etc. for D.C. Thompson (1961-63). Did you like the classics field?*

JMB: Yes, I've always been interested in period strips. I like the costumes etc, and not much mechanicals.

SL: *In 1964 you illustrated several highly regarded strips: 'Kelpie' in Wham! and 'Wrath of the Gods' in EAGLE and Boys' World. What are your memories of those strips and how did those jobs come about?*



Wrath of the Gods –EAGLE and Boys' World, 10 October, 1964

JMB: The jobs came about because, after leaving the R.A.F. in 1961, I rejoined Link Studios as a freelance artist and they were my agents. We very seldom met writers or socialised with editors. We were only the artists.

SL: *Did you know the 'Dan Dare' strip at that time and were you aware of Frank Hampson's work? Did you ever consider working on the strip?*

JMB: Of course I knew about the 'Dan Dare' strip though I didn't know Frank Hampson at the time and only met him much later on. As to wanting to draw the strip, no, not really my subject though I have drawn space strips since — anyway I could never have worked their way.

SL: *You followed this with a series of TV adaptations – 'Laramie', 'Champion the Wonder Horse' and 'Circus Boy' (1964-65). Were these annuals? I've read that a lot of artists find animals difficult, how did you enjoy drawing them?*

JMB: They were annuals and westerns - Great! Horses and other animals are not scary if you know your basic anatomies. I like to do it all myself!

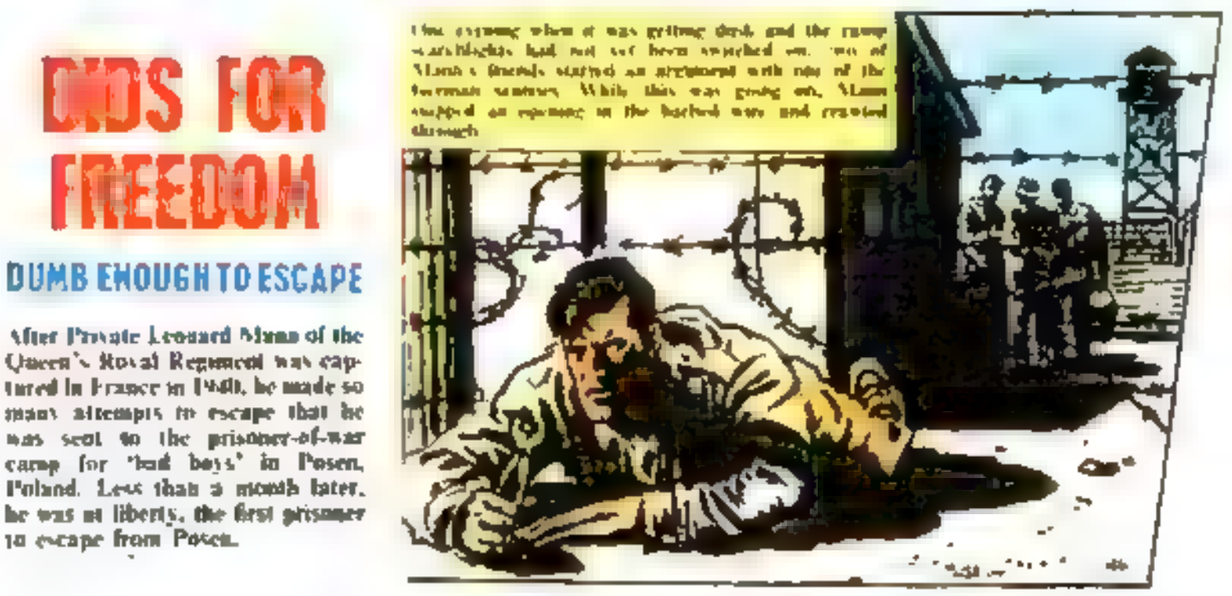
SL: *After these (1966-69) came the Gerry Anderson spin-offs in TV21, etc; 'Catch or Kill', 'Front Page', 'Space Family Robinson', 'Lady Penelope', etc. Did you meet Gerry Anderson and Alan Fennell or artists Frank Bellamy, Ron Embleton or Mike Noble at the time?*

JMB: I met Gerry Anderson just the once when we started drawing 'Space 1999' for *Look-In* - the writer Angus Allan and myself. Alan Fennell I knew only through work. I met Frank Bellamy later, again through the S.S.I., along with Ron Embleton and Don Lawrence. All nice guys, great artists.

SL: *In or around this time you began to work on a series of newspaper strips: 'The Tuckwells', 'Pickwick Papers', 'Edgar Allen Poe Stories', 'The Seekers', and 'Strange Stories'. How did you get these sorts of jobs?*

JMB: I had changed my agents by now and worked through "King Leo" run by Ian Scott and Tania, his wife.

SL: *How did you then switch to TV related strips (1971-82) such as 'Countdown', 'Mission Impossible', 'UFO', 'Space 1999', 'The Tomorrow People', 'Doctor Who', 'Bionic Woman', 'How the West Was Won', 'Buck Rogers' and 'Magnum' in Countdown, TV Action, Look-In, etc.?*



Bids for Freedom – EAGLE, 15 October 1966

JMB: I had left "King Leo" and was fending on my own. I was offered work on various mags producing TV related strips, one of them being *Countdown* where I drew the title strip (cover and inside page in black and white). I can't remember working on *TV Action.*

SL: *Did you script them and did you have a lot of research to do: checking facial likenesses, props etc?*

JMB: I had nothing to do with the scripts and there were lots of photo references supplied.

SL: *Later, between 1977 and 1985, came more newspaper strips: 'Danielle', 'Smythie', 'George and Lynne', 'Modesty Blaise' and 'Jane'. Were you influenced by your predecessors: Pett, Holdaway, Romero, etc. on these?*

JMB: 'Jane' had to be of the time so she couldn't really be like Pett's 'Jane'. I like Jim Holdaway's 'Romeo Brown' for *The Daily Mirror,* so I guess a little rubbed off for 'George and Lynne' - not a lot though. Romero…? Never!

SL: *You've worked on comic-strips for a long time. In essence, what is it you like about them?*

JMB: Mostly they're a great way to earn a living - if you can do it.

SL: *During this period you returned to EAGLE as it was then, drawing 'The 'Fists of Danny Pyke', 'Dolebusters' and, later, 'Dan Dare'. Was this something you enjoyed?*

JMB: Yes, I did! I thought the writing great and there was lots of action, some exaggerated, and 'Fists' - just good action! Both were in black-and-white, which I liked.

Dan Dare – The New Eagle, 1990

SL: *You also worked on several sexy sci-fi/fantasy strips: 'Eartha' in the News of the World (1982), 'Zetari' in Europe (1984-86) and 'Abducted by Aliens' and 'Deadlier than the Male' in America (1998). How did these come about and what were they about? Would 'Espers' fall in this category too?*

JMB: 'Eartha'? I had joined Bardon, yet another agency run by Barry Coker. 'Zetari'? I acted on my own and met Ervin Rustemiga, who at the time lived and worked out of Yugoslavia. 'Espers'? I was contacted by David Lloyd, who drew the first series. I was never happy with it.

SL: *Did you enjoy this style of strip and did you know Don Lawrence's 'Carrie' or Ron Embleton's 'Wicked Wanda' and 'Sweet Chastity'?*

JMB: I knew the strips that Don Lawrence and Ron Embleton were producing and I really enjoyed drawing mine.

SL: *You also worked on 'Dr. Who', twice (both Tom and Colin Baker). Did you like the programme or was it just another job? You also worked on 'Tripods', 'Dr. Who's replacement?*

JMB: 'Dr. Who'? They were just more work and when *BEEB* magazine offered me 'Tripods' I accepted the job. I think it was never given enough time for the publication to establish itself!

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
drawn by JOSE BURNS
AS MODESTY AND WILLIE SURFACE...
AHH... THANKS, WILLIE
WHAT ON EARTH-?
I WAS RETURNING ON THE LOWER ROAD WHEN I SAW YOUR CAR HURTLE OFF THE TOP ROAD AND DIVE INTO THE POND!
YES... I DON'T DO IT VERY OFTEN... BUT WHEN THE CAR'S ON FIRE AND YOU'RE TIED TO THE WHEEL IT SEEMS NOT A BAD IDEA
4669

'Modesty Blaise: The Green Cobra', The Evening Standard, 1979

SL: *What is more important, the story or the art - or is it a balance of the two?*

JMB: You need both. But being the artist...

SL: *Were you interested in what was going on in other strips and comics?*

JMB: One always took an interest in other strips and publications. If only "on the look out" for other work.

SL: *As you have worked in British, European and American comics, how do you feel they differ in terms of style, layout, etc?*

JMB: It's difficult to explain the difference in a few words but - the European page layout and approach to the artwork is different, more illustrative in telling the story. American seems more "in your face" brash but still mostly good, like the American action films. European I think I can liken to the "Renoir" films. British strips (what's left) comes somewhere in the middle with a bias to the American style.

SL: *Which do you prefer, comic strip or comic-book art and why?*

JMB: Both! It's what I do...

SL: *Outside of comics, what are your other interests? Do you paint for instance?*

JMB: Most other visual arts - no. I feel I might be tempted to paint rather than meet my deadlines.

SL: *Do you get your artwork back again? Did you always?*

JMB: Now, mostly, but it wasn't always that way.

SL: *In recent times, 1987-99 you have worked on more strips; 'Lilli/Julia', 'Flat Mates', 'Girl Chat' and 'Psycops'? Can you tell us a little about these?*

JMB: The first three titles were Girlie strips. 'Lilli' appeared in *Bild*, published in Hamburg, Germany, and was about two girls sharing a flat, exposing their adventures. The strip 'Girl Chat' in *The Mirror* carried on from 'Jane', who got the chop. The strip was about two girls sharing a flat, exposing their adventures. 'Flat Mates' appeared in a Sunday paper, it was about two girls sharing a flat, etc., etc.... 'Psycops', a detective strip where one of the 'tecs was an alien with special powers, hence the title. I was asked if I would take over drawing the strip as the then creator/writer and artist was becoming very busy with other work as well, so I did!

SL: *You're also still working for 2000AD on 'Judge Dredd' and 'Nikolai Dante'. Are you still enjoying these?*

JMB: Yes, most of the time. Mind you some of the writers must think they're writing movie scripts.

SL: *Your style has changed many times over the years: black and white, colour washes, fully painted etc? Which do you prefer?*

JMB: I think if I'm truthful, black and white and in the format of a daily strip, though all I do now seems to be fully painted colour.

SL: *You've won at least 5 major comic awards, as far as I know. Do you enjoy the recognition for your work; and what do you feel as you look back on your career?*

JMB: Yes, and it's been a bloody long time!

SL: *What are your plans for the future, and what do your family think of the comic world?*

JMB: Hopefully to carry on, they've been more than supportive; they lived my work along with me, especially my wife Julia.

SL: *Are comics art?*

JMB: By most of today's standards... yes. ■

'Dan Dare' – The New Eagle, 1990

RIVALS OF EAGLE (13).

CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED.

By Nigel McMurray.

CLASSICS Illustrated
No. 58
10¢
PRAIRIE
by JAMES FENIMORE COOPER
CLASSICS Illustrated
No. 78
15¢
JOAN of ARC
CLASSICS Illustrated
No. 71
15¢
The MAN WHO LAUGHS
by VICTOR HUGO
CLASSICS Illustrated
Featuring Stories by the World's Greatest Authors
No 120 15¢
THE HURRICANE
CLASSICS Illustrated
No 118 15¢
ROB ROY
By SIR WALTER SCOTT
No. 33
CLASSIC COMICS
10¢
The ADVENTURES of SHERLOCK HOLMES
by Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Well, you can't blame my parents. I was brought up in the local Methodist chapel and had to read the Eagle, the Children's Newspaper and Classics Illustrated (CI). One way and another I've kept in touch with them all except the Children's Newspaper, that being one organ of the 1950s that never held my interest. I (and my dad) revelled in the Eagle and CI and, on reflection, the two were only rivals in the sense of being rivals for my time and for my dad's money. For many parents in post-war Britain, the Eagle and CI must have been a God-send. They offered quality reads in strip cartoon format. And they were a God-send in more ways than one in that Eagle was founded by an Anglican vicar and CI by a Russian Jewish businessman! What follows is the story of CI in a nutshell in which I highlight many startling parallels with our own Eagle.

Illustrated classics. CI were just that, illustrated versions of classical novels. As the front cover banner headline in black and yellow stated – "Featuring Classic Stories by the World's Greatest Authors." The classic stories of Bronte, Defoe, Dickens, Dostoievsky, Dumas, Homer, Hugo, Scott, Shakespeare, Swift and many others were reproduced in colour strip cartoon format. And, just like Eagle, they used speech bubbles. But in the same way that the Eagle and its annuals attempted to reassure parents that there was more to life than illustrated stories, so CI always had serious non illustrated features such as details about the author, Famous Operas, Dog Heroes, Pioneers of Science, Great Lives and the like at the end of each issue.

The series started in the USA in 1942 followed by the first foreign CI in 1946. The USA operation closed in 1961 and its HQ moved to the UK the next year. However, the UK operation closed in 1963 and the numerous European operations had all ceased to exist by 1976. There was a brief revival in the USA in 1990 but this only survived for two years.

The Authors and Titles. CI published many titles that are still considered to be long-term classics such as Black Beauty, The Count of Monte Cristo, Huckleberry Finn, The Hound of the Baskervilles, Ivanhoe, Kidnapped, Kim, Lord Jim, Lorna Doone, Macbeth, Mutiny on the Bounty, Robinson Crusoe and A Tale of Two Cities. Other stories, such as Alice in Wonderland and Gulliver's Travels, came across as children's stories when in cartoon strip format but, of course, in reality they were subtle and complex tales. CI also published children's classics that were considered quality reads at the time but are extremely unlikely to ever see the light of day again on public library shelves or in bookshops. Two of my great favourite authors of the 50s – and my reading their books was inspired by my first reading CI – were RM Ballantyne and GA Henty. The former inadvertently condemned himself to oblivion by using the word 'savage' in his The Little Savage. And GA Henty's boy heroes in rumbustuous exploits of rank imperialism will, I suspect, do little but gather dust in the public library bookstores of today.

Though American in origin, CI maintained an international flavour when choosing its authors. Nevertheless, there was an understandable emphasis on American authors. The most vital of them all was Jack London with his Call of the Wild and White Fang. Other great American authors, rarely appreciated on this side of the Atlantic, but wisely incorporated in the CI listings, were James Fenimore Cooper, Herman Melville, Francis Parkman, Henry Dana and Ernest Thompson Seton. But the emphasis was never just on American authors.

Inevitably some authors are not represented. Obvious examples are John Bunyan, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Thomas Hardy, TE Lawrence and Nevil Shute.

And some stories were not classics at all. Some were loss leaders in the hope that a young reader would progress to purchasing 'real' classics. An example was The Buccaneer which was the story of the film of the same name, featuring Yul Brynner and Charlton Heston, about the Battle of New Orleans. Ben Hur was a more acceptable film tie-in; the CI that followed its release was true to the original novel.

The CI format was invariably loyal to the original text and the précis of a complex volume into 48 pages of illustrations represented remarkable feats of literary analysis. Some tales, such as Crime and Punishment and Moby Dick, were works that few of us would tackle even

now but CI managed to portray the stories very successfully to very young minds.

Why CI? All Eagle aficionados know that the Eagle was invented to counteract the bad influence of the villainous American comic market. Not so! The truth is, it was CI that was invented to counteract that market, and the Eagle was a late comer in the moral crusade to protect the innocent. The horror and trivia in the comic market in the USA in the 1940s and 1950s were deemed a much more serious threat to juveniles in America than in Britain. And so Albert Kanter invented Classics Comics in 1942 to buck the trend. He then changed the name to Classics Illustrated in 1947 in order to dissociate himself completely from the image of the comic. The Eagle, of course, always ensured that it was not tainted with the word 'comic'.

If we think that our parents had fears about our being corrupted by violence in strip cartoon format, that was nothing compared to the reaction of American parents. The most significant tirade against comics was by American psychiatrist, Dr. Fredric Wetham. During the 1940s he began focusing on comic books as a key to antisocial behaviour. In 1948, when he was President of the Association for the Advancement of Psychotherapy, he initiated a symposium entitled "The Psychopathology of Comic Books." This culminated in 1954 with his publication of "The Seduction of the Innocent", abstracts of which appeared in The Readers Digest. This resulted in hearings in the United States Senate in 1954. This almost broke the crime and horror comic industry forever. Certainly many of its publishers closed down.

However, CI in the USA and UK, and Eagle in the UK, by prophetic vision and sound management succeeded, against the odds, in offering their little customers a viable and enjoyable alternative to the addictive trivia of their day. But, sadly, neither CI nor Eagle could cope with changing media formats and the drift back to violence in our time.

The Art of CI. They were produced in full colour throughout but the outer cover was always of a much higher quality in terms of both art and colour. Seventy-six artists were employed at one time or another. They often had radically different styles from the gnarled to the sanitised, from stylised to classical, from the exaggerated to the over-simplified. As with Eagle, almost all of the artists have been identified, though it would appear that none is alive today. Nearly all were freelancers and all regarded themselves as illustrators rather than cartoonists. Often more than one artist would work on a title depending as to his specialism – action, costume, animal anatomy, a flair for the grotesque, battle scenes or work for very young children.

Most of the original art was sold by the CI owner's son in the 1970s to a handful of collectors and very few were ever offered for sale after that. There are various categories of original art including original outer cover paintings, colour proofs, page proofs and four-colour separations. The hand-written and typed manuscript files disappeared after the closure of the company in 1961. In 1988 one hundred and forty of them were "discovered in an east coast [USA] warehouse"; they were sold to one collector who has retained them but has made them available to researchers. The only other hordes are those retained by adapter Ken Fitch, and by the daughter of another adapter called Al Sundel; thankfully these are also available to researchers.

Advertising. Eagle only advertised products that were in some way related to it. Similarly, CI only carried advertising material that referred to related CI series and binders. And there was an equivalent to the Eagle Club, this being an international pen pal organisation called The International Classics Club. But CI had little to do with organising or maintaining its Club – prospective members filled out an application form on the inside cover and submitted the details to CI, who simply acted as a clearing house for the letters. It was then up to the individual little boy or girl to develop the rapport initiated through a joint love of CI.

Binders. These were always a major feature of the CI world but, like most binders, they were not entirely successful. They relied on rubber bands to hold the magazines in place in the binder and when the rubber bands dried out, your magazines fell out. Nevertheless, they still look pretty impressive on a bookshelf. Eagle only had one attempt at producing binders which were flexible red plastic; the Eagles had to be drilled through in 2 places and thin string fed through and tied. Those Eagle binders were therefore even more unsatisfactory than CI's, and I have never seen them advertised since they were first manufactured decades ago.

Collecting CI. Believe you me, collecting Eagle and associated publications is a piece of cake compared to collecting CI. At least with Eagle you only have one printing of each issue to deal with, though obviously there were various editions of some books and there were series of annuals.

But with CI there are numerous variations on every conceivable theme. Though each story has a number, this can vary from country to country and even within a country. Some titles were reprinted with or without a different cover. And the whole CI world is surrounded by deep hocus pocus surrounding the HRN (Highest Reorder Number). What's an HRN? After years of collecting, I'm still not sure! But basically it's a way of identifying the 'edition' of a title as none was dated. It is important in that some collectors save all the editions of each title. On the back cover of each CI is a numbered list (which could go up to the maximum of 169) of all the CI titles available at that time. The higher that last number, the later the edition of the title you have in your hand. Got it?

The only other significant collectibles are display racks, posters and promotional items.

As with all aspects of my collecting, I, personally, set limits. I've collected one copy of each title in English and I've left it at that! But you can imagine what the truly paranoid collectors get up to.

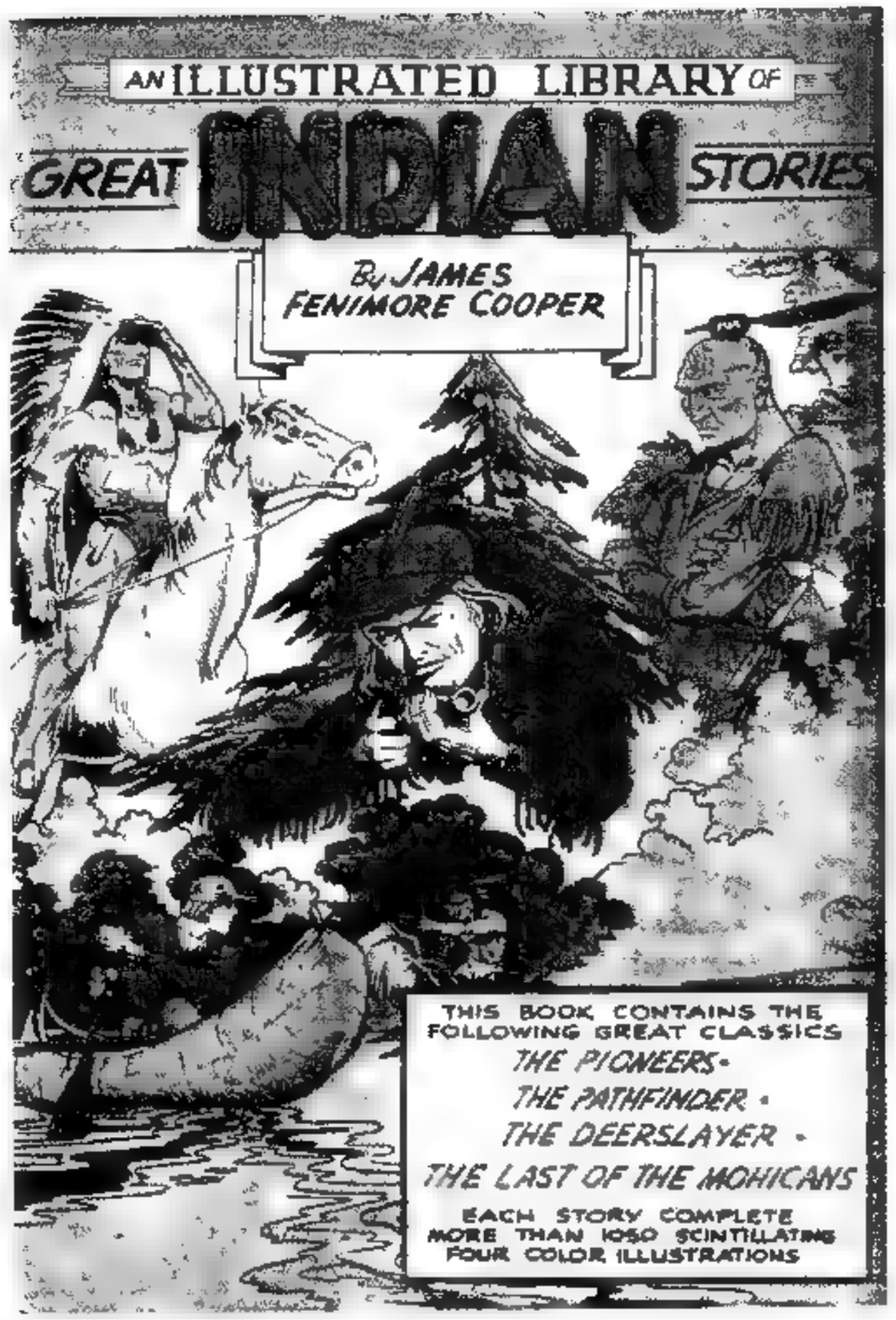
There have been five attempts to sustain **Fanzines** and **Collectors Clubs** but none seems to have survived, which is a marked contrast to the Eagle Society. CI started earlier, and finished earlier, than Eagle and it seems that none of its artists and authors are still alive. As far as I know, none of the CI clubs have survived either. The last fanzine was The Classics Collector – Featuring Articles About the World's Greatest Hobby which ran from 1987 to 1992. There was even an equivalent conference to the EagleCon of 1980; this was The Rare Classics Memorabilia Show in 1989 at the Chicago Comicon.

Other collectible CI magazines. There was a very young children's version of CI – Classics Illustrated Junior - of some seventy-seven titles from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs to The Runaway Dumpling. But there were also other important series which imparted knowledge in the strip cartoon format in areas that children may not have ventured into easily. Most important was The World Around Us Series which included The Crusades, Great Explorers, Great Scientists, Prehistoric Animals and Railroads. There were also Special Issues with such diverse titles as The Ten Commandments, The Story or Jesus and The Story of America. As with Eagle, the intention was to educate children of all ages in an entertaining and easy to read format.

CI in other languages. Eagle Society members are no doubt proud that their favourite boy's magazine has been translated into perhaps five languages. But this is nothing compared to the globalisation of CI which appeared in an astounding twenty-six languages in thirty six countries. Many were translations of the original CIs in English, but it seems that most countries published a few titles relevant to their own literary culture. The most highly prized example of a non American CI is the British CI version of Ian Fleming's Dr No.

Revivals. You've guessed it! Just as with Eagle, attempts have been made to resurrect CI for the present generation. And they have been just as unsuccessful. Some twenty-seven titles were published by First Publishing of Chicago from 1990 to 1991. They were available in the USA and Canada. The basic format remained the same as in the original CI, though logo and covers were updated. Ten of the twenty-seven titles were new.

The stark reality is that strip cartoons have been overtaken by playstations, the internet, videos and DVDs. The exceptions, of which we are all too well aware, are graphic comics. These gaudy and dire productions seem as popular a teenage reading material now as they were before Eagle and CI attempted to stop the rot. And so I end on the sad note that it is as great a struggle as ever to counteract the onslaught of violent illustrated trivia. We know this only too well in terms of Derek Lord's valiant, but as yet unsuccessful, attempts to launch 'Eureka!' to a new century of young readers. It remains to be seen if Rod Barzilay can break the mould with his new Dan Dare serial.


AN ILLUSTRATED LIBRARY OF
GREAT INDIAN STORIES
By JAMES FENIMORE COOPER
THIS BOOK CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING GREAT CLASSICS
THE PIONEERS -
THE PATHFINDER -
THE DEERSLAYER -
THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS
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MORE THAN 1050 SCINTILLATING FOUR COLOR ILLUSTRATIONS

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Eagle Press Out Books

Part 3: Wallis Rigby and his amazing career with paper card models.

By Barnaby Reed

Much of this information comes from an article Wallis prepared for the American publication, Publisher's Weekly in August 1951. The publication was aimed at the US advertising world.

Born in the 1890s Wallis Rigby left school at fourteen and, after several inconsequential jobs, joined the British Army in 1914 becoming their youngest sergeant. He was one of the few young soldiers to survive the fighting during the entire conflict.

After his war service, Wallis began to work in the advertising world.

Since boyhood his main hobby had been flying model aircraft - usually gliders of his own design. Thinking that this could perhaps earn money he turned out several patterns for flying models - scale papercard aeroplanes incorporating the Tab-and-Slot construction method which became his trade mark: two dimensional plans became three-dimensional models.

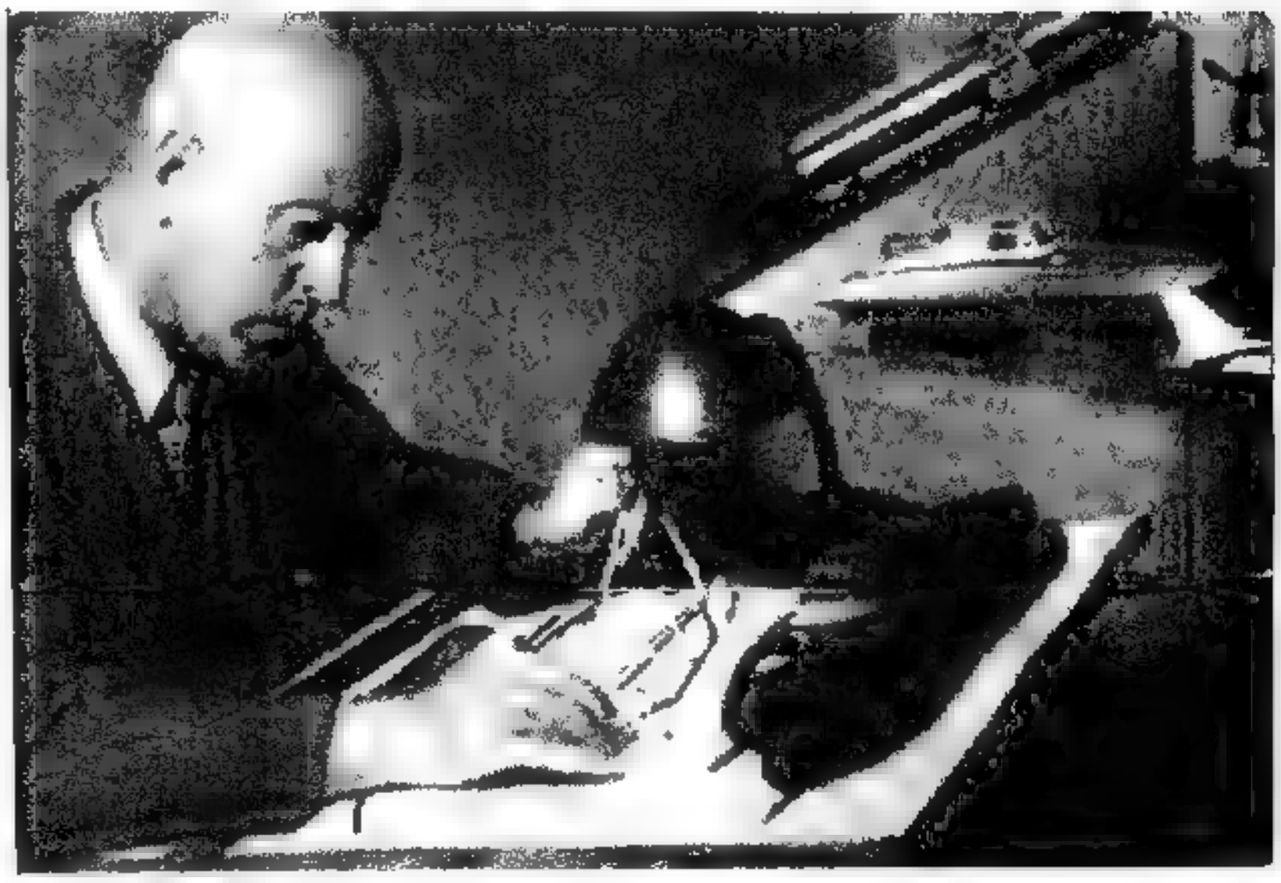
Throughout the Thirties he designed scale paper aeroplane plans; many of which were giveaways with Amalgamated Press comics and annuals. He was not the only designer of these cheap 'free gifts', but he was the most prolific and became the man most associated with this type of modelling.

Several British newspapers published collections of his clever complex designs in book form, one of which was republished in the United States. This form of modelling eventually achieved great success on both sides of the Atlantic.

Crossing the Atlantic in the late-Thirties, Wallis capitalised on the popularity of his fingercraft by setting up shop in America: firstly calling his business 'Rigby Company', then the slightly-more descriptive 'Rigby Designs' which was later to become 'Presso Company Inc.'

After he had gained the interest of several publishing houses many more collections of his designs for paper flying models were published.

When Second World War restrictions on strategic materials began to affect model making, papercard constructions really took off.



Wallis at his drawing board.

During 1940/41/42 newspapers were publishing his patterns for all types of static and flying models: essentially these were simple models produced by "cut, score, fold and glue" technique. These were not too successful as the newsprint had first to be attached to card before assembly could begin. Strangely the shortage of printing inks led to some very odd colour model plans being syndicated all over the U.S in the weekly comics-supplements of newspapers.

In 1944 Wallis's company managed to get a 'table-top' presence when the largest breakfast cereal producer began offering postal access to his warplane designs as a purchase incentive.During 1948 the same cereals producer issued a very successful set of 36 cards allowing 24 flying models to be cut out and assembled.

In the late-Forties he began to experiment with lightweight model aircraft and boats externally powered by Jetex motors. A book was produced in 1949 entitled 'Rigby's Flying Models of Jet and Rocket Planes' which had designs for ten flying rockets using a Jetex motor as motive power.

Talking about his models in 1951 Wallis said "I have never used paper or card as a substitute for other materials. For my type of modelling, I have stuck to the use of tough card or paper - paper being always the best for power driven model planes because there is no other material so suitable for the ratio of 'ruggedness to simplicity in assembling' which this class of detailed modelling demands. By folding and bending paper or card, the model's skin is stressed and thus the components gain a strength that give the model its claimed 'rugged and durable' characteristics. I have rigorously kept the models in materials and sizes with which the kids can build and, if the models have performance value, with which they can play. Some of the cereal pack models have been excellent, some have been frustrating to young people and most have to be cut from thick, brittle board: this leads to disappointment, a tendency to shy away from this valuable form of fingercraft, and a parental reaction against the medium which has disappointed the child.

"A word on accessories, fasteners and sources of power; motors have not, so far, been included in my model books(though they have been provided with my model kits). Instructions in the books tell the assembler to use some easily obtained item such as a round or a flat toothpick for a gun turret, an axle, a mast; paper clips for fasteners. A little glue to strengthen the joints and lengthen the life of the model. Most fastenings are simply a matter of inserting a tab into a slot - and often the tab becomes part of the design. In my recent model fire engine book there is an extension ladder that can be raised and pivoted on a universal joint. Yes, even this is part of the cardboard cut-out, and no other parts are needed at all...

"In some models, a long elastic thread or band can serve as a source of power. Aeroplane models in my books can be launched by hand, or by an elastic catapult, or can be swung overhead in very convincing loops and turns by using a thread fastened to the wings.

"In the course of my experiments I have developed my art to a point where, today, I am building and running - almost entirely from good card - boats and planes which actually run on jet-fuel engines !

"My most recent models have not been in books, but are available as kits as, for example, the Jetex Javelin. The little jet engine is entirely safe, by

The new
"Jetex Javelin"
is here!
for discriminating modelers
Easy to fly
Simple to make
Rugged and durable
Stressed skin construction
A real airplane
Not a glider
The latest in airplane kits, designed especially for the famous JETEX #50 power engine
Only 75¢ at your local dealer
AMERICAN TELASCO, LTD.
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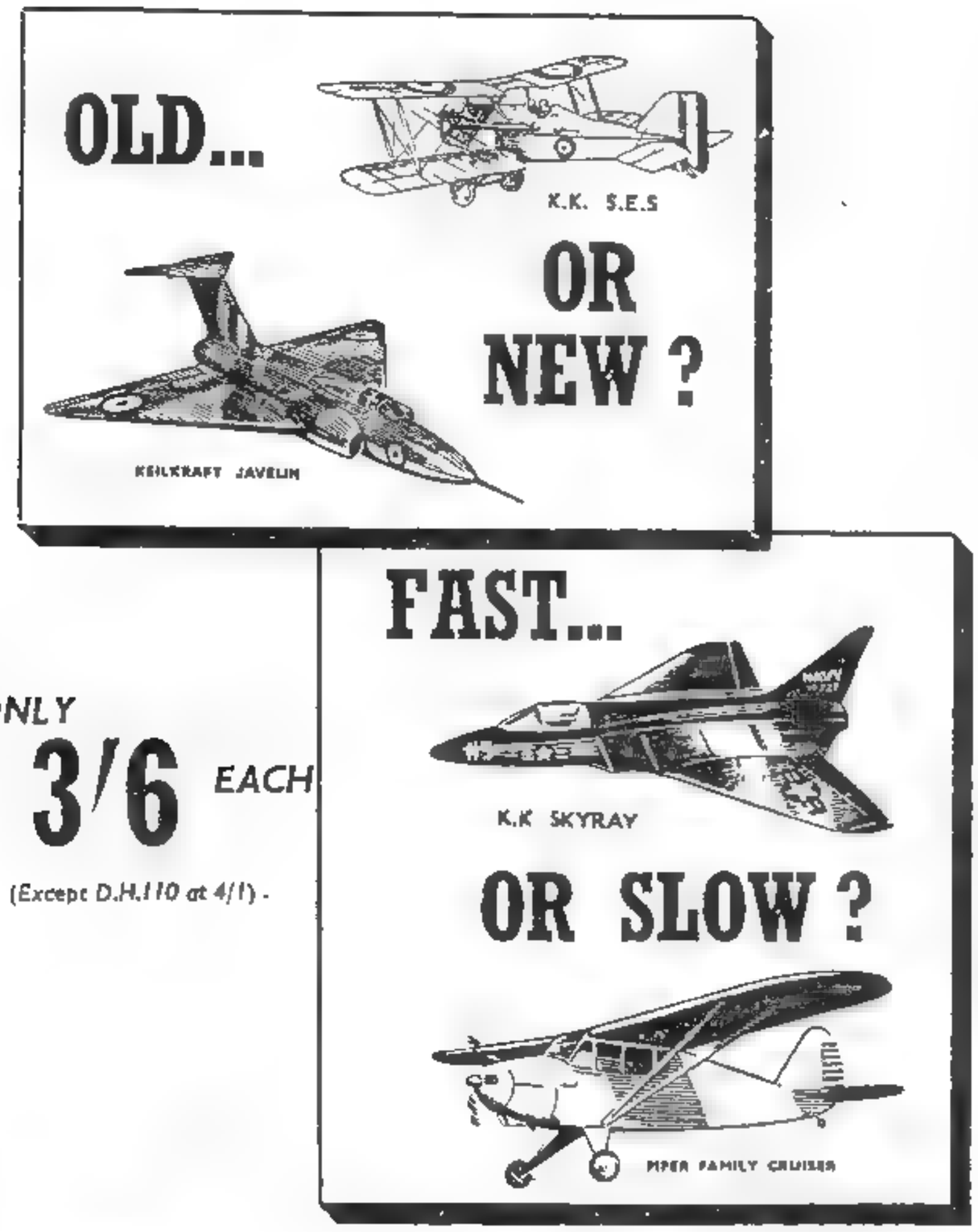
American advert. April 1951

the way. The engines in my jet plane and jet boat models are so constructed that no flame can injure the model or the user. These can be seen alongside my drawingboard in the photograph."

In the early-Fifties, although he was by now well-known in America for his paper models of aircraft, boats and trains, Wallis crossed the Atlantic once more.

Once back in Britain his Presso company's initial work on an Eagle character appears to have been the construction of a pressout card Dan Dare spaceship for J.W.Thompson - the London advertising agency who operated the Horlicks Spaceman's Club for the manufacturers of the malted-milk drink - issued in 1953. *Further work Wallis undertook as a consultant in 1952, particularly with Juvenile Publications, will be the topic of my next article.*

The following year he provided a more usual complex card model: Dan Dare's Space Ship book for Brockhampton Press(in association with John Waddington), and then, in 1955, the Anastasia Jet Plane book for the same publisher. These were coloured static display models and relatively-easily constructed from die-stamped thin card. There was no cutting required in the assembly of these models although a more-rugged model might be produced with the sparing addition of paper glue.



This was particularly important in the case of the Anastasia model as it was advertised as being a 'flying model'

Both these books incorporated text and illustrations freely adapted from two 1953 Dan Dare publications - without copyright permission apparently. These pirated books were published by Hultons and Juvenile Press; an anonymous artist joins Frank Hampson and Desmond Walduck for the illustration. The text is similarly expanded by an incompetent writer.

Brockhampton Press published many other books in the same series; model aircraft, model cars, model ships and trains besides trackside buildings. All were created by Wallis and his friends who shared his interest in this paper modelling. In Britain Wallis's company was called Presso.

Incidentally, at the time, this publisher - together with its other associated company Hodder & Stoughton - well known to schoolboys as the publisher of Biggles.

Wallis's association with Jetex motors led to consultancy work with Keil Kraft.

Wallis died in the late-sixties aged 71.

EAGLE EXHIBITIONS

..... *a word of thanks!*

by David Britton

After four years, Howard Smith and I have finally hung up our ray-guns Apart from the possibility of exhibitions in the United States it is over. The last exhibition in Manchester, from which we expected so much, disappointed with an attendance of only 7000. Had we achieved our anticipated level we would have ended with a total well in excess of 150,000 visitors

We would like to offer a general "thank-you" to all of you who have supported us throughout. In addition, there are some special thanks that we would like to make publicly.

Firstly, we appreciate the special help from the remaining colleagues of Frank Hampson Joan Porter, Greta Tomlinson, and Don Harley; Peter Hampson for the loan of a number of studio items;and the Editorial Team of Eagle Times for financial, moral and physical support as well as Nancy Bellamy for her support and help in Northampton. In terms of the exhibitions, Nicholas Hill was with us from the start and Bill Rudling introduced us to Manchester.

Others who provided items of memorabilia are Sid Clark, Rod Barzilay, Ron French, Paul Clark, Terry Doyle and Paul Holder. A couple who deserve special mention for their constant support are Mike and Kathy Miles, but also Paul and Bridget Napp for being there in Hull and for supplying copious photographs.

So to all of you FAREWELL AND THANK YOU, we had a great time!!

Anne Bonny and Mary Read
The Female Freebooters
by Geoffrey Bond

It is amazing to think that two of the most famous pirates of all time were women!

Yet those were amazing days, when anyone with a brawny right arm, who could swing a cutlass and was not afraid of the consequences, might sail on the account. And the stories of these two "petticoat pirates" (though it is most unlikely that they ever wore skirts!) cannot be ignored.

Anne Bonny was born near Cork, in Ireland, the daughter of an attorney at law. The truth concerning the early part of her life still remains a mystery, for like many adventurers of that (or indeed any) period, she was not averse to "colouring up" the less interesting details. But it is fair to say that from the time of her arrival in America her tale is a remarkably authentic one. Anne's mother died soon after the emigrants settled in their new Carolina home, and it was left to the young girl to look after her father and run the family house as best she could.

If business had been bad for the country lawyer back in Ireland, it looked up remarkably quickly now, and before long Anne's father was a comparatively rich man. He bought plantations, and settled a comfortable amount on his daughter, who in due course he intended to inherit everything. But Anne was wild. She did not believe in waiting for the future, and took life as it came and the rougher it came the better she liked it, much to the elderly attorney's disapproval.

Then one day fate introduced her to James Bonny, a handsome, dissolute sailor who quickly captured the girl's imagination with the tales he told of piracy on the high seas.

When the old Irishman came down one morning Anne had gone, and it is doubtful if he ever saw his daughter again, though her subsequent exploits must have turned his hair whiter than ever.

Throwing caution and a small fortune to the four winds, Anne had run off to marry her sailor, and then together they set out for the pirate paradise of New Providence where rum and life were cheap. What happened there will never be known, save for the fact that James Bonny disappeared, leaving his new wife stranded and alone in that nest of roistering wrong-doers. But Anne was anything but dismayed, and had not the least intention of returning to father with his dull books and sultry plantations. She looked round for fresh excitement and found it in the person of a young pirate named "Calico Jack" Rackham (so nicknamed on account of the striped cotton cloth trousers he habitually wore) who was paying a visit to New Providence while his brigantine was being cleaned and refitted at nearby Harbour Island.

The pair took to each other immediately, with the result that Rackham suggested Anne should accompany him on his next voyage.

"But Jack," she protested "I thought women weren't allowed aboard pirate craft?"

"Neither are they." Rackham's scarred mouth twisted into the semblance of a grin "But I'll see to that. With short hair beneath a coloured bandana, tunic and breeches, and a sword in your belt, you'll be no woman, but a pirate wi' the best of them!"

So Anne Bonny sailed as a member of the crew, leaving the Bahamas one jump ahead of the governor's men, for Woodes Rogers was then gaining a reputation for dealing harshly with any buccaneers in his territory.

Anne took to the sea like a dolphin and settled down to a life of small-time piracy with her Calico Jack, living like the man she pretended to be, and fighting her way out of more than one scrape.

While the ship lay in Cuba, Anne gave birth to a child and it seemed then that Rackham would be only too willing to renounce his old way of life and settle down to enjoy the spoils of a successful career and a peaceful home life. But not so Anne Bonny, who badgered Rackham to go back to sea - and take her too. Calico Jack may have been a vicious opponent with a knife in his hand, but he was helpless against Anne, who easily won him over. So, leaving the child ashore, they set out again.

After a long piratical voyage through the Caribbean and along the North American coastline the two returned to home waters, where they heard that an amnesty had been offered to all buccaneers. This was Rackham's chance. He persuaded Anne to surrender, with the idea of settling down for good, before the hand of fate

dealt either of them the ace of spades and brought their lawless little game to a sudden end

Perhaps it was too late already. Perhaps they had been too long at sea now to seriously consider any other way of life. But whatever the reason, it was not long before Jack and Anne had volunteered for a privateer then being equipped to sail against the Spanish squadrons.

It might well have been Anne Bonny who persuaded the crew to mutiny and turn pirate, but besides Calico Jack she certainly had an ally in a newcomer of similar age, a youngster with a soft face but hard eyes, and a surprisingly light voice.

That crew member, as Anne was soon to discover, was a certain Mary Read!

Mary Read, the second woman pirate, had an even more bizarre background than Anne Bonny.

She was born in London, where her mother insisted on dressing her as a boy, so that not even her closest friends came to find out the secret of Mary's sex.

As soon as she was old enough Mary Read left home and went down to the docks where she signed on a warship as a cabin boy. On the other side of the channel she deserted, travelled overland to Flanders, and joined the army, in which she served until the Treaty of Ryswick.

After the campaign, where she proved herself to be one of the finest fighters in the regiment, Mary married one of her male comrades and they took over the proprietorship of an inn called "The Three Horseshoes" in the Netherlands, not far from regimental headquarters. But with the death of Mary's husband she took to the sea again, this time signing aboard a vessel bound for the West Indies, where she was to establish her ultimate reputation.

It was on the privateer-turned-pirate that Mary Read met the man who was to be her next husband, and was responsible for saving his life.

It happened this way. The man (who was, incidentally, the ship's pilot) provoked an argument with one of the toughest fighters on board, with the result that he was challenged to a duel.

"You can't win," whispered Mary when she heard the news " 'tis well known that he's the best among you with either sword or pistol. And I'm not having you killed yet awhile!"

"But what shall I do?" asked the pilot, almost shivering with anticipation.

"Leave him to me," replied Mary, and her man was quite content to do so.

Before the duel could be arranged Mary Read picked an opportunity to stage another quarrel with her husband's enemy, with a resulting sword fight following at once.

The crew gathered round to watch the slight, boyish figure of Mary as she parried and thrust against the heavier blade and body of her opponent.

Backwards and forwards they went, steel clashing against steel, flicking out silver sword tongues to draw red and wound to kill.

Mary Read ducked, feeling the swish of air that followed in the wake of a whirling blade. An inch or two lower and it would have taken off her head. She fought on, cool-headed and awaiting the chance that she knew must come sooner or later, holding out until that moment despite the weapon that grew heavier in her tiring grip. Then it was upon her

She saw her opponent lower his guard for an instant to dash away the sweat that trickled into his eyes. She struck, and the point of her sword tore through cloth and flesh, then into the rib cage

to reach the heart. The man opened his mouth to scream as he spiralled to the ground clutching the blade which had run him through.

Of all the onlookers to that hard-fought duel Anne Bonny was the most unperturbed, perhaps even secretly envying her friend's callous skill.

Rackham and his crew (among which the two women had now been completely accepted), sailed back to Harbour Island in 1720, ransacking the place for provisions and other essentials. After that they continued to Hispanolia where they attacked two sloops, took prisoners, and went ashore to kill wild cattle for fresh meat.

Somewhere near the middle of October that same year the pirates stood-to off Jamaica, preparatory to raiding the western coast. Just by Negril Point they took a turtle-fishing craft; but they took it too easily. The seamen were willing prisoners, and suggested that their captors should drink rum with them, to which the two women pirates and their men folk readily agreed.

As they caroused their way to slow insensibility neither Mary Read nor Anne Bonny stopped to think that they might have walked into a trap.

But that was the position, which had been carefully engineered by Sir Nicholas Lawes, the Governor of Jamaica, who determined to catch the marauders and bring them to justice.

He had fitted out a merchant sloop, manned it with armed volunteers, and this under the command of Captain Barnet now lurked in a nearby creek, waiting to pounce on the pirates when the turtle-fishers had got to work with the rum.

By the time Calico Jack spotted the approaching sloop it was too late to run. Hardly had the pirates filled their own sails than the sailors were on top of them, throwing out the grappling irons that bit and held with a menacing clunk.

Over went Barnet's men, back went the pirates to fight a half hearted rearguard action from the safety of their own ship's hold. The only two who gave the attackers any trouble at all were Anne Bonny and Mary Read, and they fought like wildcats, drawing much blood before they were finally overpowered.

The courthouse at Port Royal was packed to hear the sentences upon Rackham and his pirate crew, every one of whom was sentenced to death on the gallows (so the story goes). But a ripple of surprise ran round the room when, on being asked if they had anything to say before the sentence was passed, two of the tough-looking seamen said "Yes, my lord. We plead our bellies." This, in the language of the day, meant only one thing - that they were women with child.

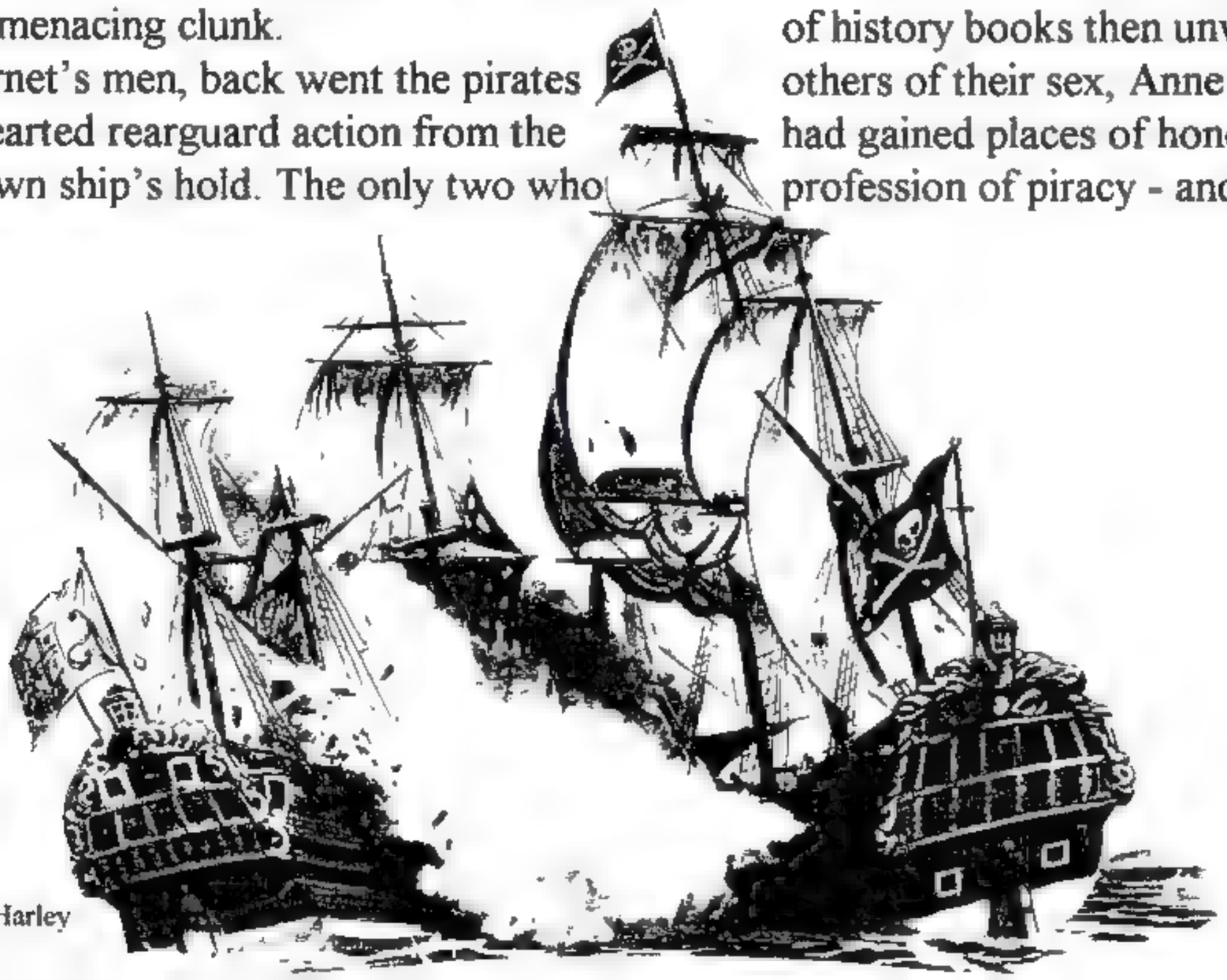
The judge found it hard to believe, and at first thought it a grim joke by the doomed men, but examination proved the words to be correct and Anne Bonny and Mary Read had their sentences commuted to imprisonment, according to the law that no pregnant woman may die on the scaffold.

So much for fiction. The fact is that the two women were brought to trial at San Jago de la Vega, in Jamaica, on Monday November 28th, 1720,and by then their sex was already known.

Calico Jack Rackham and his fellow pirates had been separately tried and hanged a week previously. But though their lives were spared the fates of the two female pirates were not to be happy ones.

Mary Read died in prison shortly afterwards, before giving birth to her child, and although Anne Bonny was released through the influence of some rich planter friends who had known her father, she faded into obscurity, and in all probability finished her days in squalor as some dockside drab.

So they sailed no more, save through the pages of history books then unwritten. But, unlike any others of their sex, Anne Bonny and Mary Read had gained places of honour in the dishonourable profession of piracy - and that was a feat in itself.



Don Harley

FRENCH UNIFORMS IN JACK O'LANTERN

PART TWO

by Mick Baker

Grenadier à Cheval
and Grenadier à Pied
Note: The Grenadier à Cheval does not have the metal plate on his bearskin.

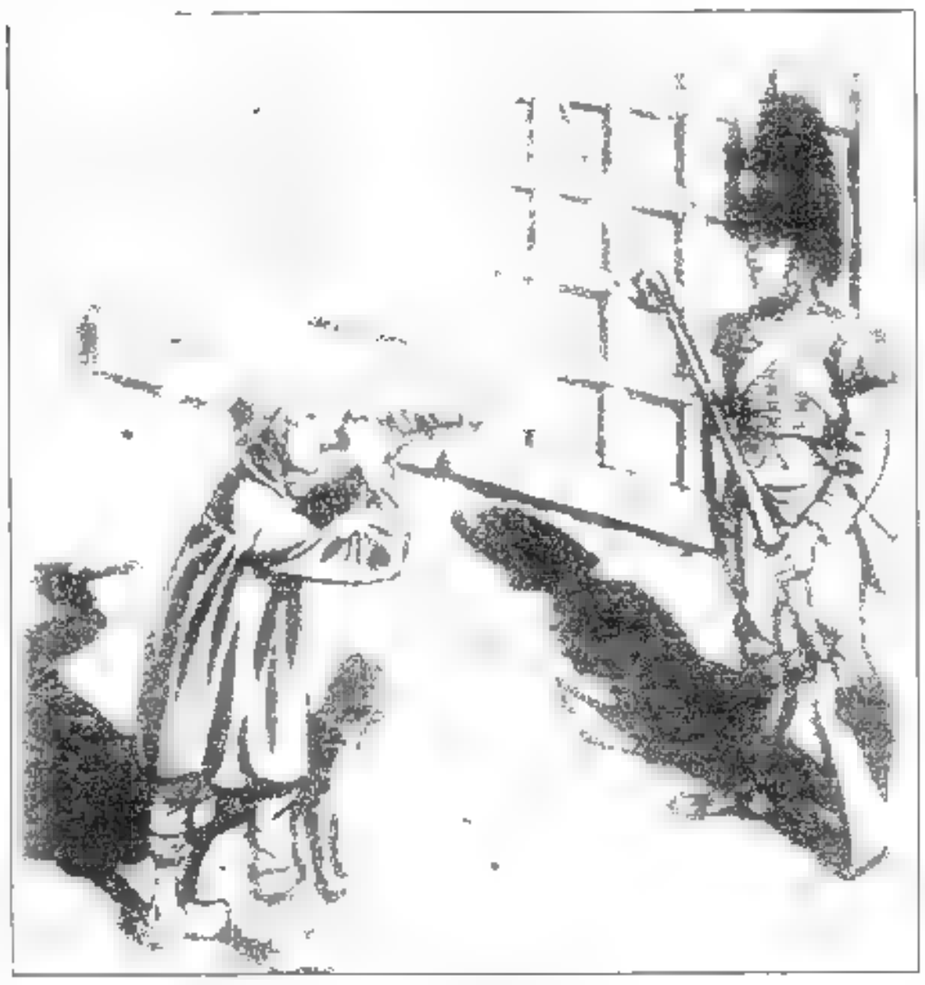


fig.viii

Bill informs us that the sentry in Vol.8 No.8 frame 8 *"... is a soldier wearing the bearskin and blue coat of a grenadier in Napoleon's Imperial Guard"* [fig.(viii)] (albeit a British-shaped bearskin and incorrect cut and shade of blue coat). In Bill's article he speculates *"I'm sure Napoleon would never have employed his guards as jailers ..."*

Although my initial reaction to this comment was to agree, I am assured by a colleague who cites *'The Anatomy of Glory'* as his source that in fact the Guard were, on occasion, so used. From 1804 the Imperial Guard were regarded as the army's reserve. They enjoyed vastly higher standards of pay, living conditions, uniform and prestige. Their uniforms, because new ones were issued more frequently, preserved the look and rich colour, thereby taking longer to fade. It was thought wasteful to expose them unnecessarily, and so they were often withheld from combat, much to the troops' disgust - hence the Grenadiers' nickname of 'grognards' or 'grumblers'.

"Uncommitted in many battles, they were finally extinguished at Waterloo, vainly attempting to halt the pursuing allied forces to allow the remainder of the army to escape." (The Napoleonic Sourcebook)

Returning to the text of the story *"Manhunt"*. Before we meet Bill's guardsman, we see in Vol.8 No.7 the exterior of the Chateau of Malpuits where Rufus is being held. One presumes that the men guarding such an establishment would all come from the same regiment. In other words, if the sentry in No.8 is an Imperial Guardsman then it follows that wherever we see sentries at this chateau

▲ *fig.ix* ▼ *fig vii*

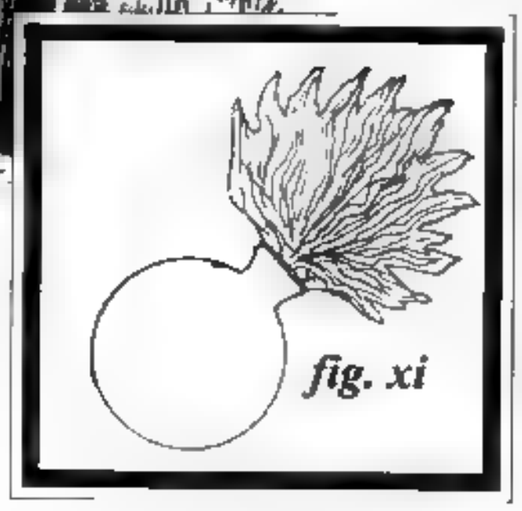


fig. xi

they too would be of the Guard. It must be stated though, that certain elements of these guards' uniforms (bearskins and thigh boots) would fit the Elite Gendarmerie of the Imperial Guard.

However, there seems to be a colour-reversal in the uniforms between No.7 (Red jacket/ blue breeches/ thigh boots/ cross belts/ bearskin & plume) - including metal bearskin plate) fig.(ix) & fig.(xii) - and No 8 [fig.(vii)] (Blue jacket with gold frogging/red breeches with gold piping/cross belts/ gaiters/bearskin with no plate). The habit coats of the grenadiers were not square cut and had no frogging. None of the soldiers shown wear the white hat cords and raquettes, and the plumes are incorrectly shown for Grenadiers, as these were neither worn on the right nor in the front but on the left. Bill's line drawing of a Grenadier was far closer than any of the strip illustrations. The only absolutely correct features would seem to be red epaulettes and red cuffs on the second version of the

fig. x

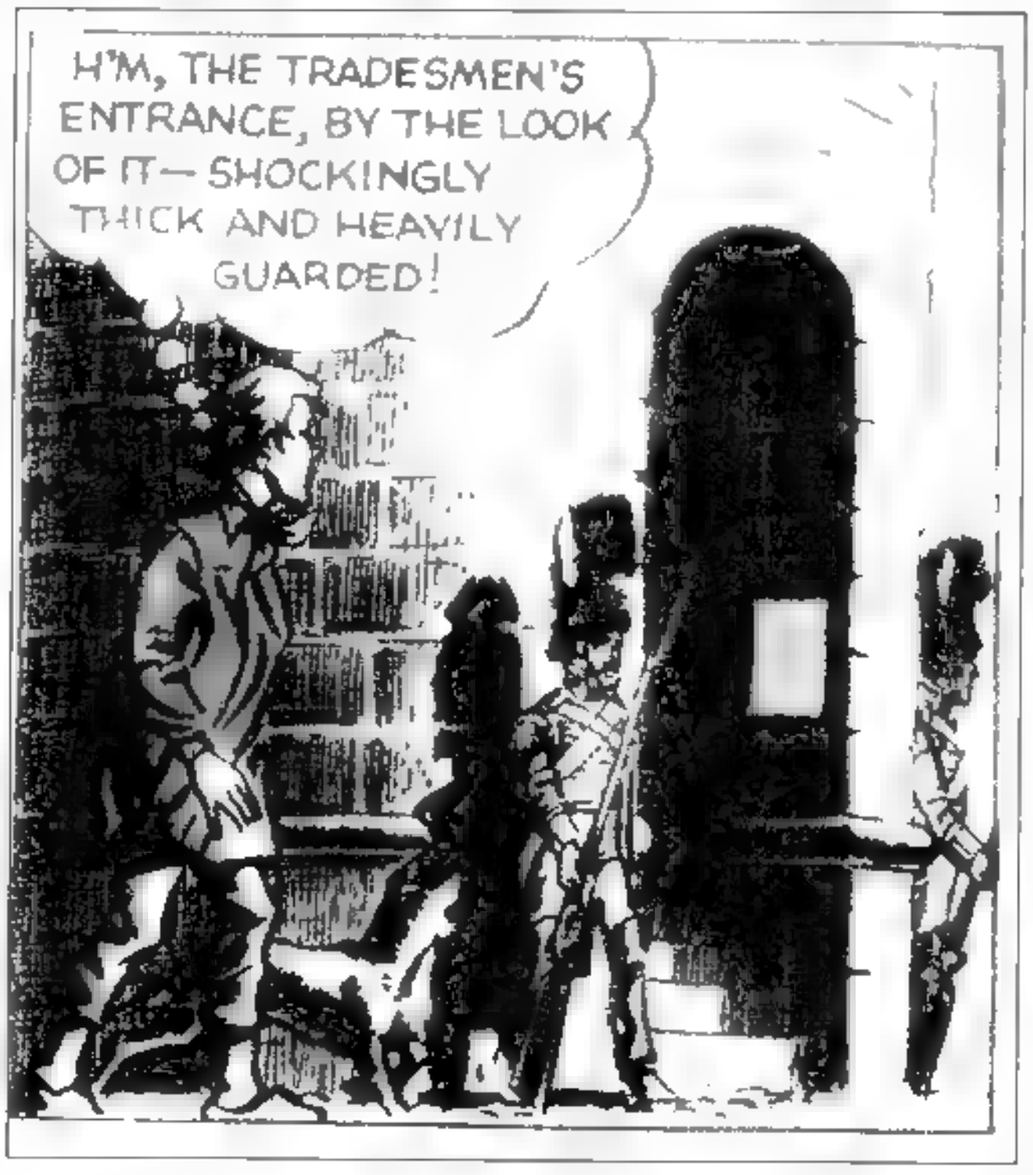
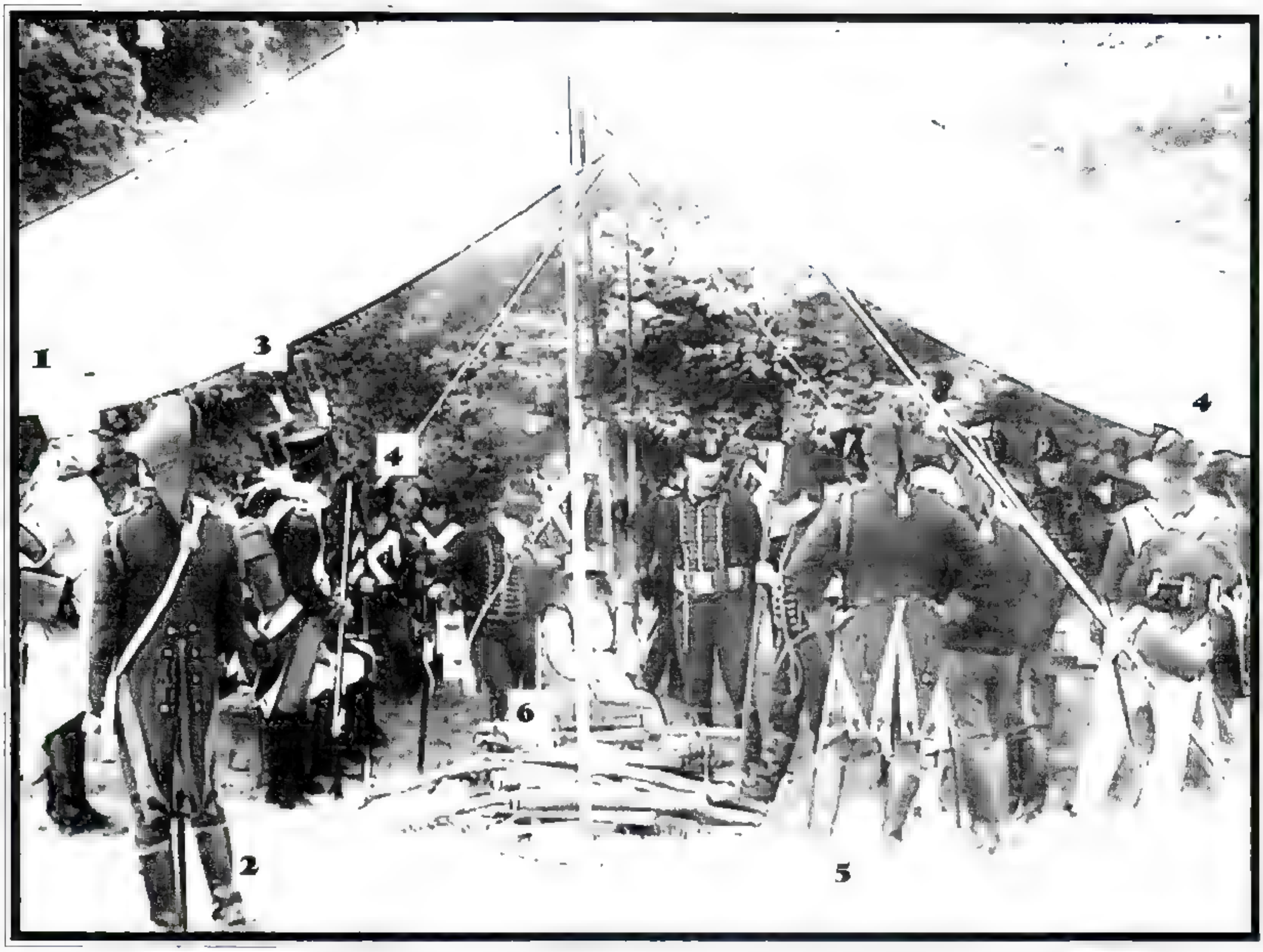


fig. xiia

uniform. As noted earlier the Guards emblem of a grenade [see fig.(xi)] is not apparent but rather something which looks like crossed swords over a shield or similar - but as I said earlier, source material has multiplied over the years.

Earlier in Vol.8 Nos.4,5 & 6 we see another uniform worn by Rufus's guards at the town jail. Again, similar uniforms to the Imperial Guards of later episodes, (apart from the blue trimmed red headgear with green plume) [fig.(x)]. See above.



Some Napoleonic soldiers of the period.

Far left : **1** A soldier wearing the covered shako and greatcoat of the 45th Line infantry; **2** An artilleryman of the Artillerie Legère (which became the Horse Artillery of the Imperial Guard); **3** two soldiers from the 309492 Line Infantry, displaying their distinctive yellow collars and yellow & green plumes;
In the background to the right : **4** Displaying white cross-belts are several members of the 9 ème Light Infantry demi-brigade and **5** other members of the Artillerie Légère.
In the centre : **6** A cantinière, whose job it was to provide sustenance to the troops. Regiments usually had two or three and they were normally married to sergeants.

French Field Artillery

9 ème Light Infantry and Artillerie Légère in action

fig. xv

Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard

fig. xiib

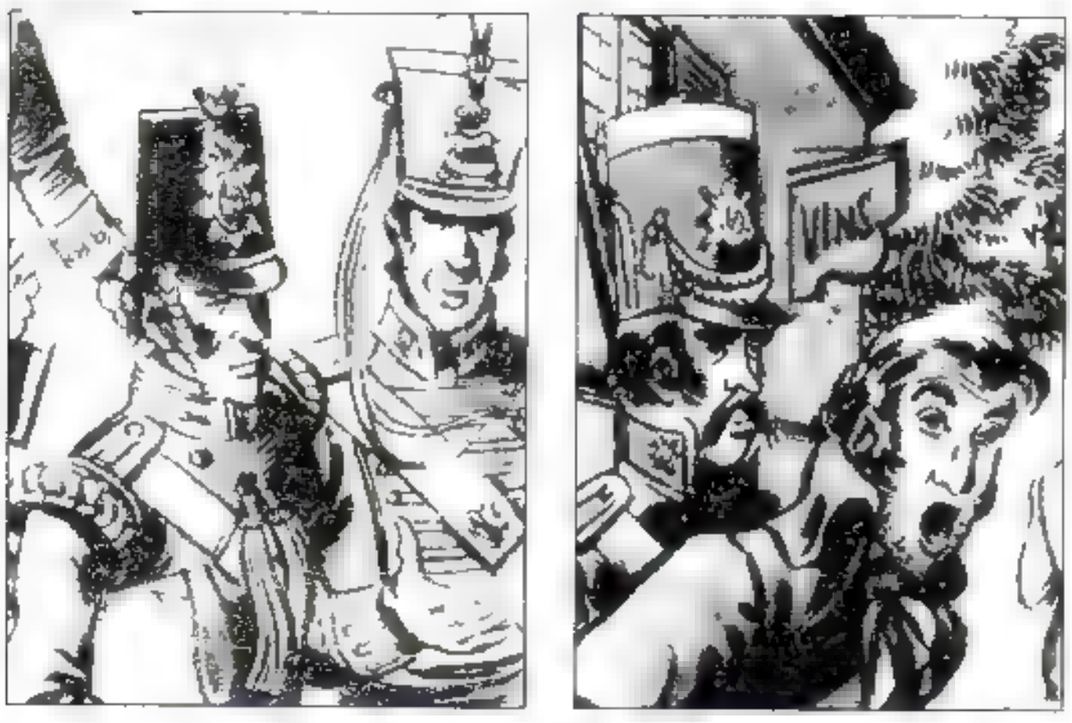


fig. xiii

I have yet to identify this regiment. They wear red epaulettes, white breeches and cross belts - all standard issue for the Imperial Guard but they could also be from a line infantry unit.

Uniforms were constantly changing and evolving and some styles depicted are too early for the strip, which takes place between 1811 and 1814. The blue trimmed headgear referred to earlier seems to belong to a much earlier period. It could even be a 'mirleton'(sic) - a tall wrap-around hat worn by several fin-de-siècle regiments. Bill has identified several different periods himself - " ... *plumed Roman helmet (1828 design)* and in the same frame the guard is described as *"a member of the Gendarmarie National; this was a police force organised in 1802."*

Whilst researching this article I caught a glimpse of Napoleon looking out from the back page of Vol.8 No.1 [fig.(xiv)] and was taken by the unusual colour of his habit-coat - blue. I was relieved to see that by Vol. 8 Nos. 3 & 7 [fig.(xv)] his sartorial standard had been restored to the more acceptable Chasseur green, although it must be said that the .

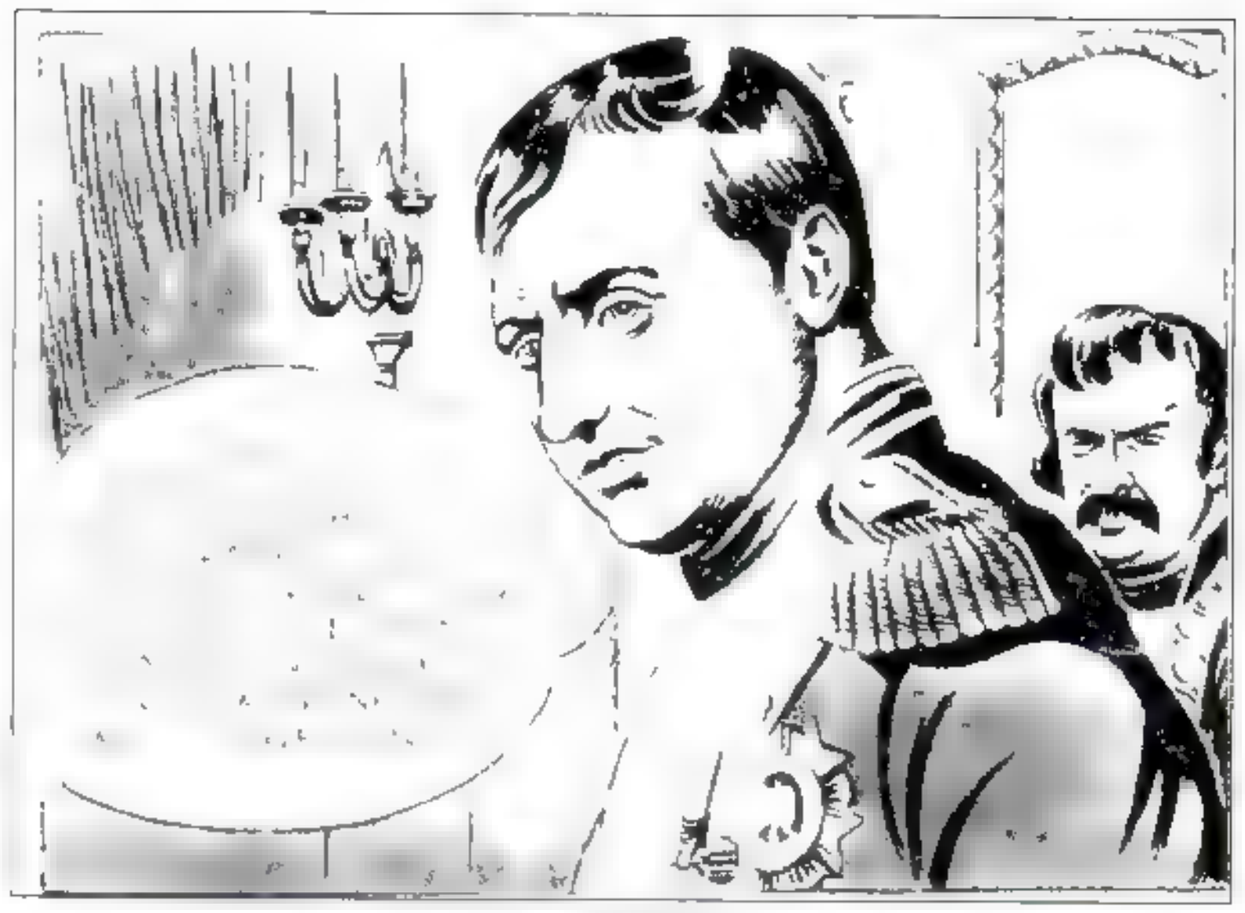


fig.xiv

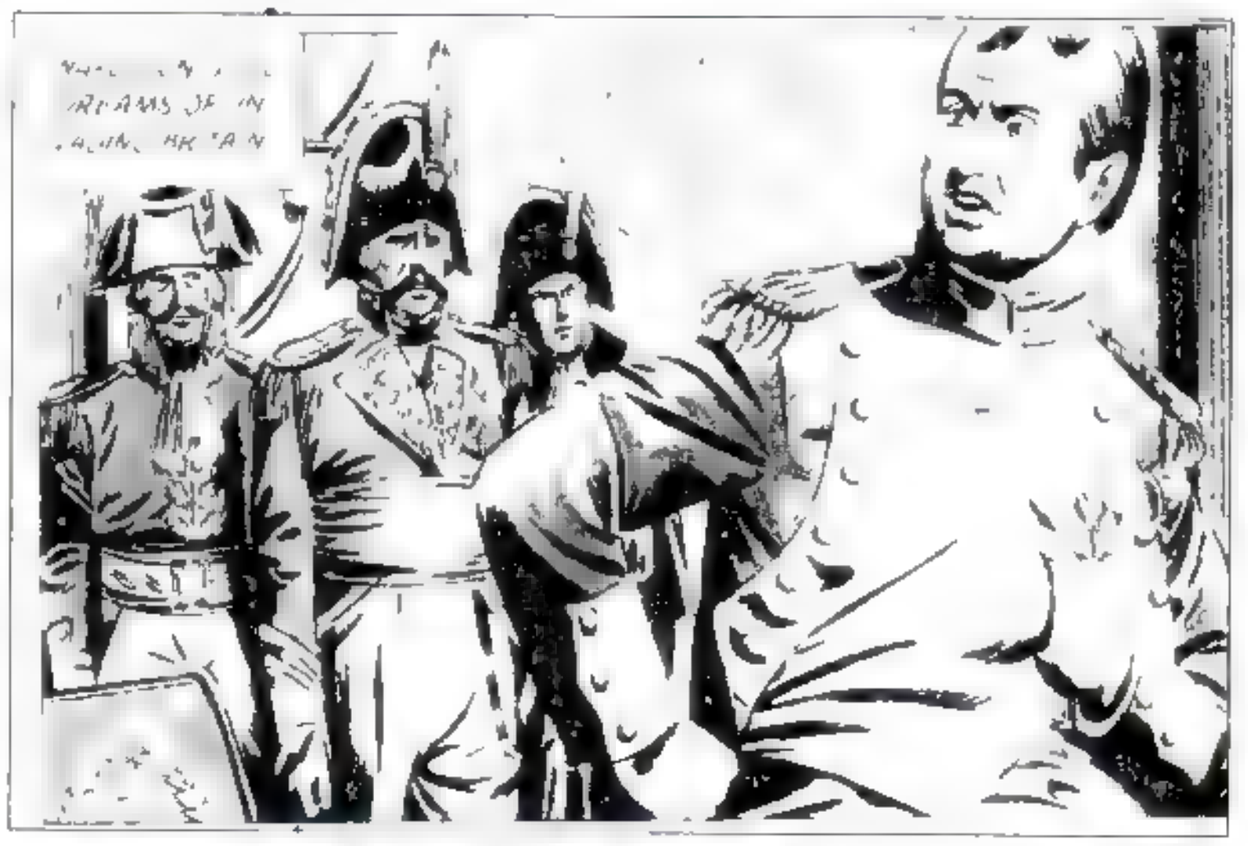


fig. xiv

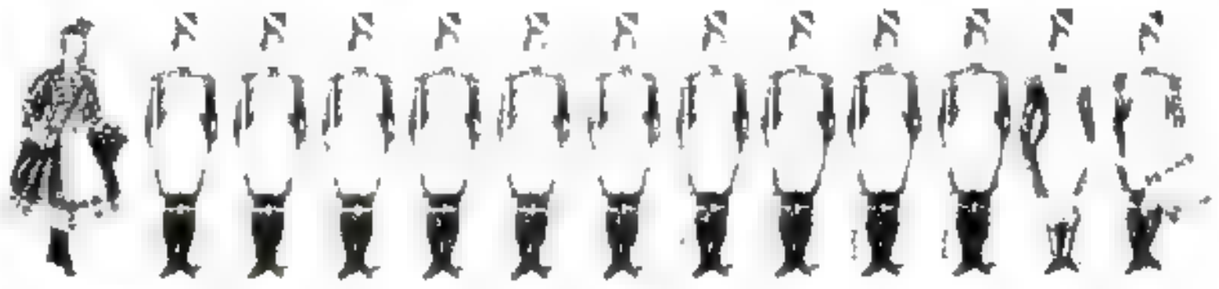
Emperor did have many jackets and would have worn whichever one suited the occasion. A point of criticism that could be raised,nonetheless, is the style of the Emperor's shoulder-boards which are not nearly grandiose enough!

The photograph on the first page of this article will give the reader some idea as to how an Imperial Guardsman actually looked.

I have used Michel Petard's contemporary definitive work on the French uniforms of the period as well as consulting the following volumes:

Anatomy of Glory - Lachougue and A.S.K. Brown.
The Napoleonic Sourcebook - Haythornthwaite.
Napoleon's Line Infantr - S. Maughan-Europa Militaria.
Napoleon's Imperial Guard - ditto

Page layout: William Rudling



"Curly Bill"

by
Paul Wilkins

Cowhand Horn and I were discussing the gunfight at OK Corral story and he mentioned a character that appeared in the Riders of the Range radio series called "Curly Bill". I had an idea that he was a real person and so looked him up on the internet.

Sure enough, there his story was : Born William Brocius "Curly Bill" Graham in Texas, he became an outlaw early in his life becoming involved in robbery, murder and cattle rustling .

Fleeing Texas to Arizona, he finished up in Tombstone . Here he shot dead Town Marshal Fred White on January 6,1880. Wyatt Earp pistol whipped him after the killing and sent him to jail. The new Marshal declared the shooting an accident and freed Curly Bill.

The election mentioned in the Riders of the Range story did take place and just as in the story Curly Bill rigged the ballot at San Simon. He forced a Reverend at gunpoint to give them religious services and robbed a mule train carrying silver coming from Mexico. He was a real reckless and wild cowboy.

On March 24,1882, Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday were on their trail of vengeance to avenge the crippling of Virgil and the murder of Morgan. Their posse found Curly Bill and two blasts from Wyatt's shotgun killed him near Iron Springs.

Reading the report of the Riders of the Range "Tombstone" story in the Spring E.T. , I see how skilfully Charles Chilton had incorporated this real life character into his radio programme. ■

Looks Familiar

Derek Wilson sends in this frame from a Young Marvelman comic from 1954. Is it a cameo of Dan,maybe at the artist's whim?

THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Harrisburg Patriot News

No. 5,783 Published daily in Harrisburg Penn. Friday April 14 2004 85 cents

MAYOR ACTS TO BAN TWEED CONVENTION

Special Report by Dee Eiser and Warren Peace

Leading British Tweedies arriving in Harrisburg for last year's convention.

Mayor Reed Warbler of Harrisburg has banned the notorious 'Harris Tweed Society of North America' from holding a convention in Harrisburg today. The Society, who have caused $5,000 worth of damage to the city during previous conventions,had made a block booking at the Towne Inn under the false name of the 'Connecticut Comics Connoisseurs Convention'.

Eagle eyed hotel clerk Lorne Mower noticed that the names of the convention organizers 'Trisha Dewer' and 'Teresa W. Hird' were both anagrams of 'Harris Tweed', so he alerted the Police at once.

"I noticed that the names of the convention organizers 'Trisha Dewer' and 'Teresa W. Hird' were both anagrams of 'Harris Tweed', so I alerted the Police at once," said Mr Mower yesterday.

Police and National Guard units responded quickly and set up road blocks on all approaches to the city. 'Trisha Dewer' was stopped on Highway 81 and was revealed to be Duane Pipe, Chairman of the Tweed Society, wearing his Aunt Taffeta's clothes.

The Tweed Society of North America was founded in 1991 in honor of a British cartoon hero from the 1950s. 'Harris Tweed' was a pompous and incompetent detective who inspired a large cult following in England to form the original society. They have regularly caused mayhem in Great Britain over the past thirty years, with their re-enactments of Tweed's

adventures, riotous conventions and lobbying outside art galleries for 'Tweed' exhibitions to be held.

A leading American Tweedie.

The U.S.A. was mercifully spared this cult until 1991, because 'Eagle', the original comic book that Tweed's adventures appeared in,was banned here due to its dangerously high quality in comparison to our own comics. However,in 1991, a box of remaindered copies of a Tweed reprint album from 1990 was smuggled into the country. Harris Tweed's boastful pomposity, coupled with his ineptitude,quickly attracted a large following of like-minded Americans and Harrisburg was unfortunately adopted as the new society's spiritual home.

Following Mayor Warbler's prompt action in banning the society, concerns are growing in Canada that they may attempt to move the convention to Tweed, Ontario. All Royal Canadian Mounted Police leave has been cancelled and the borders are being hastily reinforced.

BRITISH TWEEDIES DENIED ENTRY TO U.S.

From our International Correspondent Cole Slaw.

Two top British members of the notorious Harris Tweed Appreciation Society, on their way to the Harrisburg Convention,were refused admission to the United States last Saturday after a series of incidents on their flight from London.

A spokesman for Virgin Atlantic said that the two men, Rob Marzipan and David Ghoul,had initially attempted to distract the pilot and then to open a door while the plane was in flight.

Back in London, Mr Marzipan commented: " I don't know what all the fuss was about. All we did was try to open a door to let some air in. They should put catches on the windows if they don't want people to open the doors! As far as bothering the driver is concerned , we only went to ask him whether British planes fly on the left or the right side of the sky. We thought he'd know."

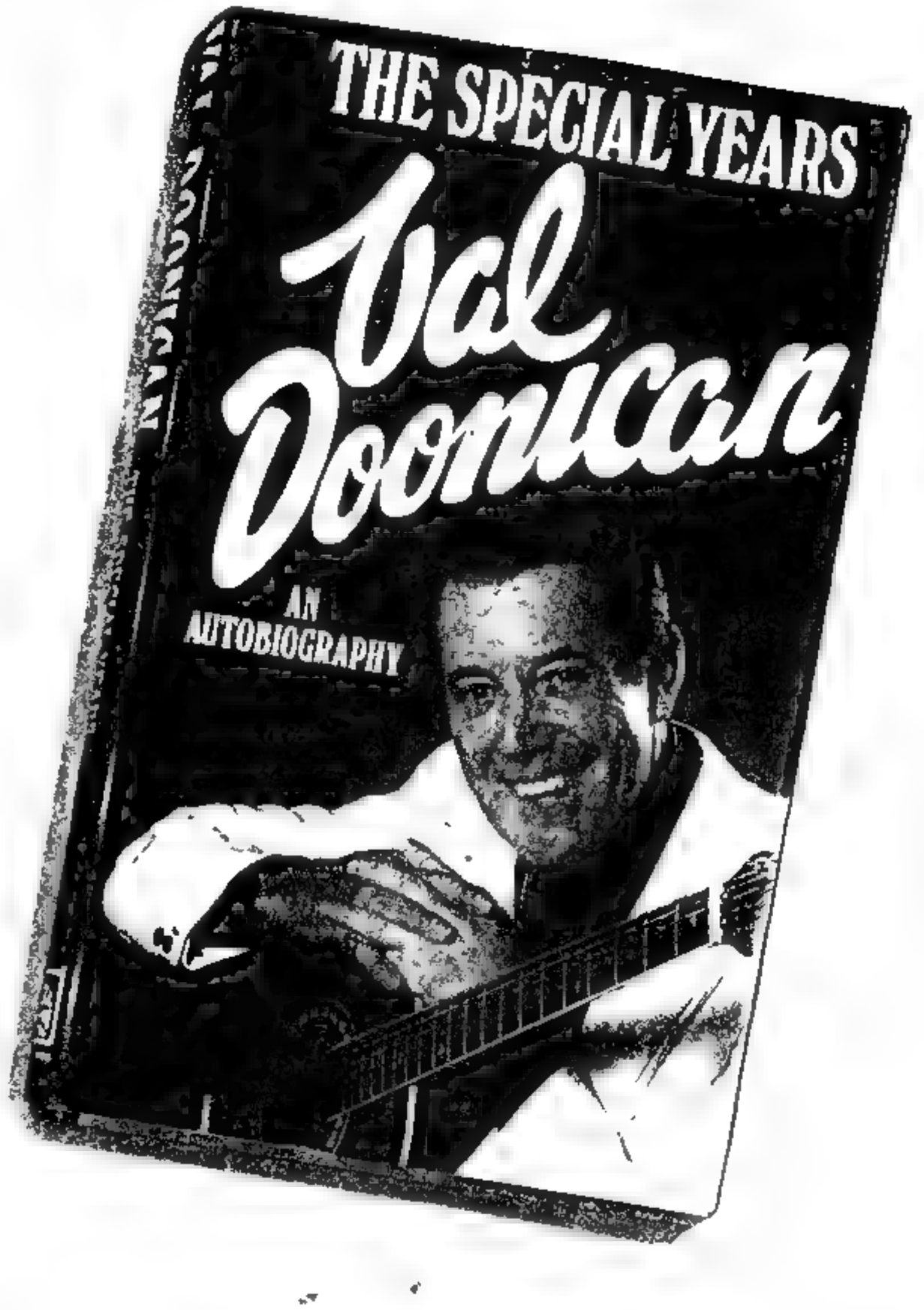
Cartoon 'hero' Harris Tweed

Steve Winders found this article on his visit to America last Easter

VAL and CHARLES

by Cowhand Horn

When I found out that The Four Ramblers were part of the 'Riders of the Range' radio team and Val Doonican was in the singing group, I sought out Val's Autobiography 'The Special Years' to see if he had anything to say about the series. I was not disappointed.



The book was published by Elm Tree Books in 1980 and contains not only Doonican's life story to that date, but several of his drawings he did thought his career.

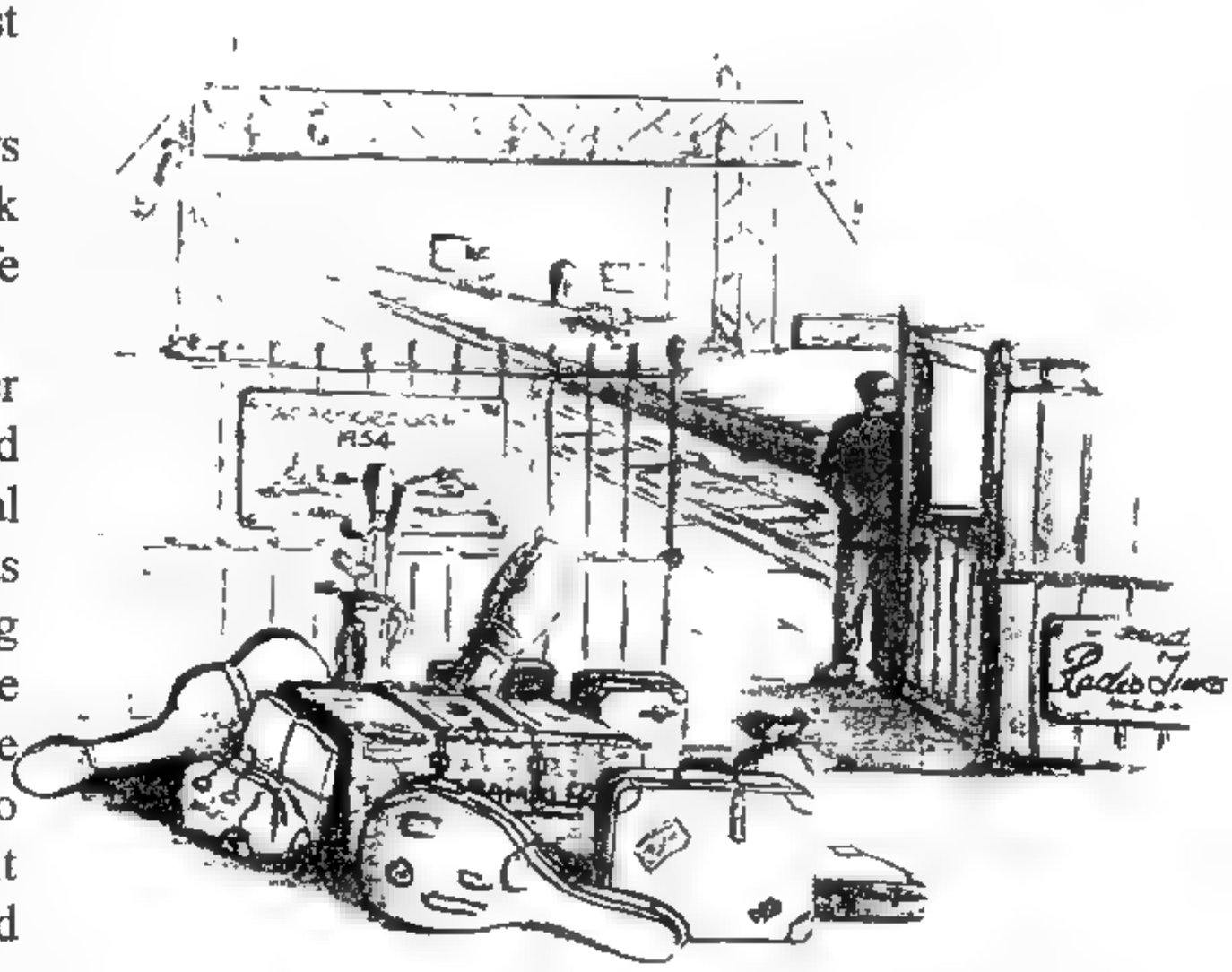
During 1951 Val was working at the Olympic Ballroom, Dublin, when the manager told him during a warm-up for a show that he was wanted in his office. He was greeted by two men, Pat Campbell and Dermot Buckley, two of the Four Ramblers. He learned that one of the quartet was leaving the group through ill health, and would he be interested in joining them?

Val said yes and after a month he was on his way to England. In the book, Charles Chilton is described as "an exceptionally talented man" when they meet at the BBC. As The Four Ramblers they not only sang in the show but took the parts of ranch hands or bunkhouse boys who happened to sing in the style of Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. The Ramblers wrote songs for the show and Val describes the thrill of hearing his songs coming to life as the show was recorded.

The series lasted for thirteen weeks and the Irish lad found singing the many songs the most exciting thing that had happened to him so far.

The Ramblers also did many other shows throughout the land as well as their radio work and several drawings in the book give a feel of life on the road.

Val was also allowed to pursue his own career and,when the Riders of the Range series finished on the radio, Charles Chilton wrote a musical documentary called 'The Story of the Texas Cowboy'. This series starred the American singing film star Tex Ritter who assisted Charles in the writing of the series which told the story of the West right through its history and in doing so explained how the cowboy came into existence. It was illustrated by songs of the West from Round Up songs to Rebel , Railroad and Campfire songs.



On tour with the Four Ramblers throughout the 1950s

The Four Ramblers
L.to.R
Peter Roy,
Frank Davies,
Dermot Buckley,
Val Doonican.

•

Above:
"The Irish Cowboy"
The radio series with
Tex Ritter.

Tex Ritter knew many traditional songs but had no music for them so Charles and Val went round to the Texan's flat and put many songs to music. The show was broadcast in 1957.

Charles' next venture after this was the story of the Civil War, another musical history called "The Blue and the Grey". This show was a landmark for Doonican as he was allowed to sing three solo songs, his first on British radio,and he was mentioned in the credits. This gave Val an idea that he could make it on his own in the media and so he phoned up the BBC for an audition. He was accepted….

Right:
The Four Ramblers
and friends on stage 1953.
Val is on the far right,the
West Indian is Archie Lewis,
who was the singer with the
Geraldo Band.

PC49 and
The Case of the Squeaking Bear (part 2)

Adapted from Alan Stranks' radio story
by Keith Howard

Story so far: Archie and Joan find what looks like a child's teddy bear floating in the Grand Union Canal. Later Arthur Sanson, a renowned taxidermist, is found dead in the same canal by PC49. A post-mortem reveals that Sanson has swallowed a key ...

"What sort of key was it?"

"Safe deposit box. Wright's been chasing it up all morning." Wilson glanced up through his puffs of tobacco smoke. "Well,let's hope he gets something."

* * *

Mr. Flack, of the Sterling Safe Deposit Company, ushered Detective- Sergeant Wright and Police Constable Berkeley-Willoughby into his office. The introductions made, Mr. Flack sat primly at his desk with Wright facing him in the visitor's chair. Archie stood dutifully to one side.

Mr. Flack, as immaculate as a tailor's dummy, and with about as much warmth and personality, surveyed his visitors through his large horn-rimmed glasses. "Well, gentlemen, how can I help you?"

The stoic Sergeant Wright was not a man to beat around the bush. Without ceremony he tossed a small metal object on the desk. "First you can tell me if this is one of your keys."

Mr. Flack picked up the key and stared at it owlishly. "Let me see ... M'm - yes. That's a Sterling Safe Deposit key." He shot a somewhat accusing glance at Wright. "May I ask how you came by it?"

Wright was not the sort of man to be messed around. "I'm asking the questions just now, Mr. Flack," he retorted, nettled by the man's prissy manner. "I want to know the name of the depositor to whom that key was issued."

"Oh, dear, dear, dear," twittered Mr. Flack. "You put me in a very difficult position, Inspector."

"Sergeant, Mr. Flack," Wright corrected him in a deadpan voice. Mr. Flack still twittered like an old hen. "Most difficult. However, if I must - I must. The key was issued to a Mr. Arthur Sanson."

Wright glanced over his shoulder. "Arthur Sanson? Got that, Forty-nine?"

"Right: Yes, sir," responded Archie, spelling the name out aloud and writing it in his notebook.

"Now, Mr. Flack, let's have his address," pressed Wright. "Most irregular ... I don't think he'd like it ..."

"I assure you he won't mind," Wright answered with a grim smile. "Not now!"

Mr. Flack gave in, albeit ungracefully. "I'll have to get it from records."

"All right - get it!" Sergeant Wright was fast losing his patience. "Meanwhile we'll have a look at the contents of Mr. Sanson's box."

This was too much for Mr. Flack. "Oh, I can't allow that, Sergeant. I'm absolutely sure Mr. Sanson wouldn't approve!"

Wright leant across the desk. "Listen, Mr. Flack - Arthur Sanson was fished out of the canal early this morning with a foot of cold steel sticking in his back."

Mr. Flack's glasses slid down his long nose ... "What! Arthur Sanson - dead?"

Archie mentally bit his tongue. He almost chipped in that such artificial appendages are not reckoned on improving a person's health and well-being, but he wisely maintained the silence as befitted a uniformed minion.

Meanwhile Mr. Flack was bleating and lamenting to almost a Shakespearean degree and Wright's finesse - what little was left to him - was rapidly dissipating. "Every second counts in a case like this,'' he urged. "Come on now - where did he live?"

Mr. Flack clucked his tongue." One of our client's – murdered!" He made it sound as if Sanson had deliberately got himself killed to bring the Sterling Safety Deposit Company into ill-repute. "I'll look up his card at once."

He opened a desk drawer and shuffled through an index file, muttering names in alphabetical order. "Ah, here we are: Sanson, Arthur - 1A, Carraway Street, London W.1."

Wright nodded. "I know it. Forty-nine!"

"Yes, Sergeant!"

"You carry on here. Check the content of Sanson's box with Mr. Flack here. I'll get over to Carraway Street right away. Report back to headquarters as soon as you've finished."

"Yes, Sergeant."

Wright headed for the office door. "Morning, Flack," he flung over his shoulder. "Thanks for your help."

"Don't mention it, Inspector."

"Sergeant, Mr. Flack!" Wright's voice resounded back before the door slammed behind him.

That set the prim and proper Mr. Flack dithering again. "Of course ..." He rose from his chair and turned towards Archie. "Now, Sergeant, if you'll just follow me."

"Not Sergeant, Mr. Flack - Constable," Archie corrected him in a far more gentle tone than Sergeant Wright's.

Mr. Flack disengaged his foot from a wastepaper basket and struggled to regain his composure. "Quite. This way, Constable."

* * *

Detective Inspector Wilson glanced up from his desk where he was discussing the case with Bellamy the Police Surgeon. "Ah, come in, Wright. Get anything?"

Detective Sergeant Wright closed the door behind him and approached the desk. "Yes, sir," he replied with a brief nod of acknowledgement in Bellamy's direction. "Identity established. The murdered man was Arthur Sanson, a famous taxidermist."

Bellamy raised an eyebrow. "A bird-stuffer, eh? That's a new one for us."

"Animals mostly, doctor," Wright gently corrected him. "What about the key?" pressed Wilson.

"It came from the Sterling Safe Deposit Company. I left P.C. Forty-nine checking the contents of the box while I went round to Sanson's place. He lived in rooms over his workshop - alone."

"What did you find there?"

Wright shrugged. "I had to force an entrance, but someone had been there before me. You never saw such a shambles. Every specimen in the place had been ripped to pieces."

Wilson rubbed the tip of his blunt nose with his pipe stem. "Somebody looking for something, eh?"

Being by nature respectful of his senior officers Wright let the rhetoric of this pass.

"If it was there, they found it," he replied, recalling the utter chaos of Sanson's flat.

"Anything of interest among his papers?"

Wright shook his head. "Nothing helpful. His passport showed he was a bachelor of fifty-three, born in Dundee. There were a few letters from his sister in Canada, a member's ticket for the Royal Zoological Society, and a pass book on Greenslade's Bank, showing a balance of a couple of thousand pounds."

"Nothing to suggest that he had enemies?"

"Not a thing. But everything to suggest that he was a respectable craftsman and respectable citizen. He's been shipping stuff off to museums and collections all over the world for the past twenty years."

He was interrupted by a knock on the door. At the usual grunted invitation from Wilson, Archie entered

"Well, Forty-nine?" asked Wright. "What did you find?" Archie produced his notebook and, standing formally to attention, read out his report.

Mr Flack ushered Dt. Sgt. Wright and PC49 into his office.

"Box number three-four-five-two-seven. Sterling Safe Deposit Company, held in the name of Arthur Sanson deceased, contained -"

Wilson sucked irritably on his pipe. "Step down out of that witness box, Forty-nine," he demanded impatiently. "How much?" But Archie was not to be put off his stroke. "- contained forty-four thousand, three hundred and seventy-five pounds." Wilson gaped in astonishment, his pipe falling from his mouth and scattering ash all over his desk. The stoic Wright simply raised his eyebrows. "I smell a full-sized rat," he murmured. "He never got that stuffing birds!"

Bellamy leant back in his chair and grinned ruefully. "I always knew I was wrong to take up medicine. Seems to be more money in stitching 'em together than cutting them up." He whistled reflectively. "Forty-four thousand quid ..."

Wilson surreptitiously flicked the pipe ash from his desk and glared into the middle distance.

"There's something more in this than taxidermy. If that was straight money, he'd have had it in the bank. It's an odds-on bet this Arthur Sanson's been mixed up in a racket."

"We'll find out if he has, sir," Wright assured him. All right, Constable," he said to Archie. "Good work. It's your day off, isn't it?"

"It was, but -" began Archie.

"You'd better tell your sergeant to extend your time to make up for what you've lost on this job this morning "

"Excuse me, sir," Archie replied. "I don't mind at all. I'd like to stay on the case if I could be of any assistance."

The pleading spaniel look in his eyes was lost on Inspector Wilson. "Let's see if we can manage to solve this one without you, eh, Constable?" he retorted with some irony.

"Off you go, Forty-nine," Wright dismissed him. "And don't you let a couple of commendations make your head too big for your helmet."

Archie retreated, confused, flustered and embarrassed. "Yes, sir - I mean no, Sergeant - I mean-good morning, Sergeant!"

Even his three superiors were unable to suppress a laugh at Archie's confusion. In fact it was one of those occasions when a bit of humour was very welcome when dealing with such a grisly murder. "Tell you what, Inspector," chuckled. Bellamy. "I bet you one Havana against three Jamaicas that he wipes your eye again."

"If he does I'll have him transferred to the Isle of Dogs!" Wilson exploded. "Now, Wright ... let's get busy."

* * *

Archie sat opposite Joan on the sofa in her flat with a small table between them, bearing plates of sandwiches, biscuits and a tea tray.

"Another cup, Archie?" offered Joan.

Archie passed her his cup and saucer, his whole manner distrait. He was still fretful about the Arthur Sanson business. "I don't see why Inspector Wilson had to chase me off this case," he complained. "After all, I found the body, didn't I? Looks as if I'll never get transferred to plain-clothes."

"Don't let it get you down, darling," Joan replied pacifically as she passed him another cup of tea, "You can't solve every crime in the division, you know. Here's your tea."

Archie took the proffered cup and saucer and stirred the tea moodily. "I guess you're right. Still, I wish the D.D.I had let me stay on the case ..."

Joan picked up a newspaper. "Let's see what the evening paper says," she murmured. "No picture this time - and they don't even mention your name - they just refer to you as 'a constable'. Don't they know you're 'The Constable'?" She pecked him affectionately on the cheek. "Or at least you're my constable."

Even this display of passion left Archie unmoved. "I'm just a common copper to them," he sighed. "All feet and no brains." But something in the paper had caught Joan's attention. "Archie! Listen to this. 'Arthur Sanson was a taxidermist of considerable reputation whose work was keenly sought by collectors all over the world. Detective-Sergeant Wright, who is conducting the investigations, revealed that when he visited the victim's workshop early this morning, he found the place in a state of chaos. Priceless stuffed specimens of rare animals had been ruthlessly slashed to pieces. What the intruders were searching for, and whether they found it, still remains unexplained'."

The sandwiches had become history, vanishing beneath Archie's moustache. He put down his cup and saucer and selected a biscuit. "I didn't know that," he mused absently. "I wonder why ..."

Joan was stabbing at the newspaper with her finger. "Arthur Sanson. **Arthur** Sanson! Darling, why didn't you tell me he was a taxidermist?"

Archie nibbled at the biscuit. "What's it matter? Taxidermist, taxi-driver - baker or bargee. I've been chased off the case."

"Archie, you've **said** it!"

"Said what?"

"Bargee! That's the missing link!"

"What are you getting at?"

"Let's put these links together."

Archie resisted the temptation to sniff Joan's teacup.

"What links?"

"First - Bargee," Joan replied with carefully controlled patience. "What does that bring to mind?"

"Barges" Archie responded, completely at a loss. "The canal, I suppose."

"Now - 'Arthur'. What does that remind you of?"

"Well ... Big-Hearted Arthur-"

Joan was almost having a pink fit.

"No-no! Where have we come across that name in the last twenty-four hours?"

"Arthur ..? Arthur!" Realisation dawned suddenly in Archie's confused mind.

"Good Lord! Uncle Arthur!" he exclaimed, dropping his garibaldi biscuit in astonishment and also into his tea. "The note on the little teddy bear!"

Archie! Listen to this...

"Exactly. The note stuck on a long pin which was driven right between the bear's shoulder blades-"

"-in precisely the same manner as Arthur Sanson was stabbed!" Archie somewhat ghoulishly voiced her thought processes.

"-and found in exactly the same stretch of canal."

"And that little bear was-"

"-the real thing!" Joan triumphantly concluded their joint deduction. "A proper taxidermist's specimen!"

Archie's moustache seemed to bristle with excitement. "By Jove! I think you've got it.

We're on to something here."

"We've got to get that bear back," Joan decided, "and find the child who wrote that note."

But Archie was already on his large copper's feet and heading for the door. "You're right. Come on - hot-foot to Mother Coldfoot's. Maybe that bear will squeak yet."

* * *

All the lights were out in the little corner shop. Archie ceased beating a tattoo on the door and turned to Joan standing just behind, her face an anxious yellow mask in the streetlight. "It's no use," he sighed. "We'll never wake the old girl up." "Try again Archie" Joan urged him.

With another sigh Archie resumed his assault on the weathered doorknocker. "If you ask me, she's had a nice drop of gin and-". His assumption of the situation was interrupted by the sound of a sash window overhead being thrown open. Joan glanced up. "There she is now - up at the window."

"Who's that?" an irate voice called down. "If you don't go away I'll call the police."

"It is the police Mrs. Coldfoot" Archie called back. "It's me."

By night Mrs. Coldfoot had changed from a motherly, soft-spoken old lady to a fearsome being with her hair grotesquely rolled in curlers. She looked like Medusa. The lack of dentures didn't help much either. "What do you want at this time of night?" she demanded angrily.

Reasoning that a woman-to-woman approach might be the best way of approaching her, Joan replied, "We want that little bear we left here yesterday, Mrs. Coldfoot."

"Well, you can't have it," came the snapped reply. "Young Elsie Higgins came and got it this morning. She said she knew who it belonged to."

"'Elsie Higgins? Where does she live?"

Mrs. Coldfoot, curlered and toothless, pointed across the narrow street. "Third door down on the left. Now go away and let an honest woman sleep!" And with that parting shot the window was slammed down with a very final-sounding bang. "Cheerful old thing, isn't she?" Joan sniffed. But Archie was already on the move again.

"Third on the left," he called over his shoulder

"Come on, Joan."

The little side road was one of many similar roads in the London area; old but well-built terrace houses with a minuscule front garden which may or may not have a rickety wooden fence with an equally rickety wooden gate. The windows were in darkness at the Higgins residence but a hall light glowed through the beautiful stained glass panels in the ornately moulded front door. The semicircular fanlight above the door was emblazoned with the house name in gold-tinted glass. It could have been 'Lindisfarne' or 'Dunromin' but the elaborate gothic lettering was so convoluted its message was virtually indecipherable.

Archie kicked over a couple of empty milk bottles in the darkness, trod on the Higgins cat and rattled the door knocker. Almost at once the door was opened six inches and a pale, apprehensive face peered through the narrow gap; a face surmounted by the inevitable curlers.

Anxiety rather than anger greeted Archie this time and he was quick to reassure Mrs. Higgins that there was no cause for alarm but he did need to ask little Elsie a couple of questions.

Reassured by the presence of Joan, Mrs.Higgins allowed them into the hall and called her daughter who had just gone to bed. Looking like a little ghost in her pale nightdress, Elsie came slowly down the staircase, brushing her tousled dark hair from her eyes. Too young for curlers, thank goodness, Archie mentally noted. Then with a surge of joy he saw that she had the toy bear under her arm.

Elsie stood close to her mother who instinctively put an arm protectively around her shoulders. Archie hunkered down to be on head level with Elsie so as not to intimidate the child. "Sorry to wake you up so late, Elsie," he began in a soft, reassuring voice, "but it's very important. We want to know just how you got hold of this little bear in the first place."

"Go on, Elsie," her mother urged, aware of the child's tension against her. "Tell the policeman where you got that there bear."

"I didn't steal 'im," Elsie said in a small voice. "Honest I didn't."

"I'm sure you didn't," Joan smiled down at her. "Just tell us what happened."

"I was playin' on the tow-path near the canal on Sunday afternoon, when e comes along-"

"Who - the bear?" asked Archie in surprise.

"No - Uncle Arthur!" Elsie scoffed, almost laughing at the silly things some grown-ups say.

"Had you ever seen him before?"

"No, never. 'E said 'e 'ad to go visitin', and if I liked, 'e'd let me mind the teddy until 'e came back. 'E told me to be very careful of 'im 'cause 'e was a very important sort of bear. 'E said if I waited there till 'e come back 'e'd give me a shillin'."

"And did he come back?"

Elsie shook her head. "Not while I was there. I waited and waited until it was nearly dark. Then I wrote the note to say 'goodbye Uncle Arthur' and pinned it on Teddy's back and sat 'im by the canal. I s'pose 'e must've fell in."

"I didn't 'arf tan 'er for gettin' 'ome late," her mother chipped in. "Nearly six it was."

"Then you saw the bear in Mrs. Coldfoot's window;" prompted Joan, making an educated guess.

"Yes, I did," Elsie at once confirmed. "I knew 'e was lost, so I thought I'd better bring 'im 'ome I ain't done nothin' wrong, 'ave I?" she finished, her voice trembling nervously.

Just the opposite, thought Archie. She could have cleared off with the bear as soon as 'Uncle Arthur's' back was turned. Instead, she had done the honest thing and left it with that note. "Of course not," he told her, fishing in his pocket. "Here's the shilling Uncle Arthur promised you. I'm afraid we'll have to take Teddy away with us. He's got to have an operation."

Elsie clutched her unexpected shilling. "Are you goin' to mend 'im so 'e'll squeak again?"

Inwardly Archie smiled at this unconsciously apt turn of phrase. "That's the idea, Elsie," he smiled. "To make him squeak."

* * *

The table in Joan's living-room had been cleared for the 'operation'. The 'patient', a stuffed koala bear, lay in its centre, awaiting 'the knife' while the two 'surgeons' bickered over the 'instruments'.

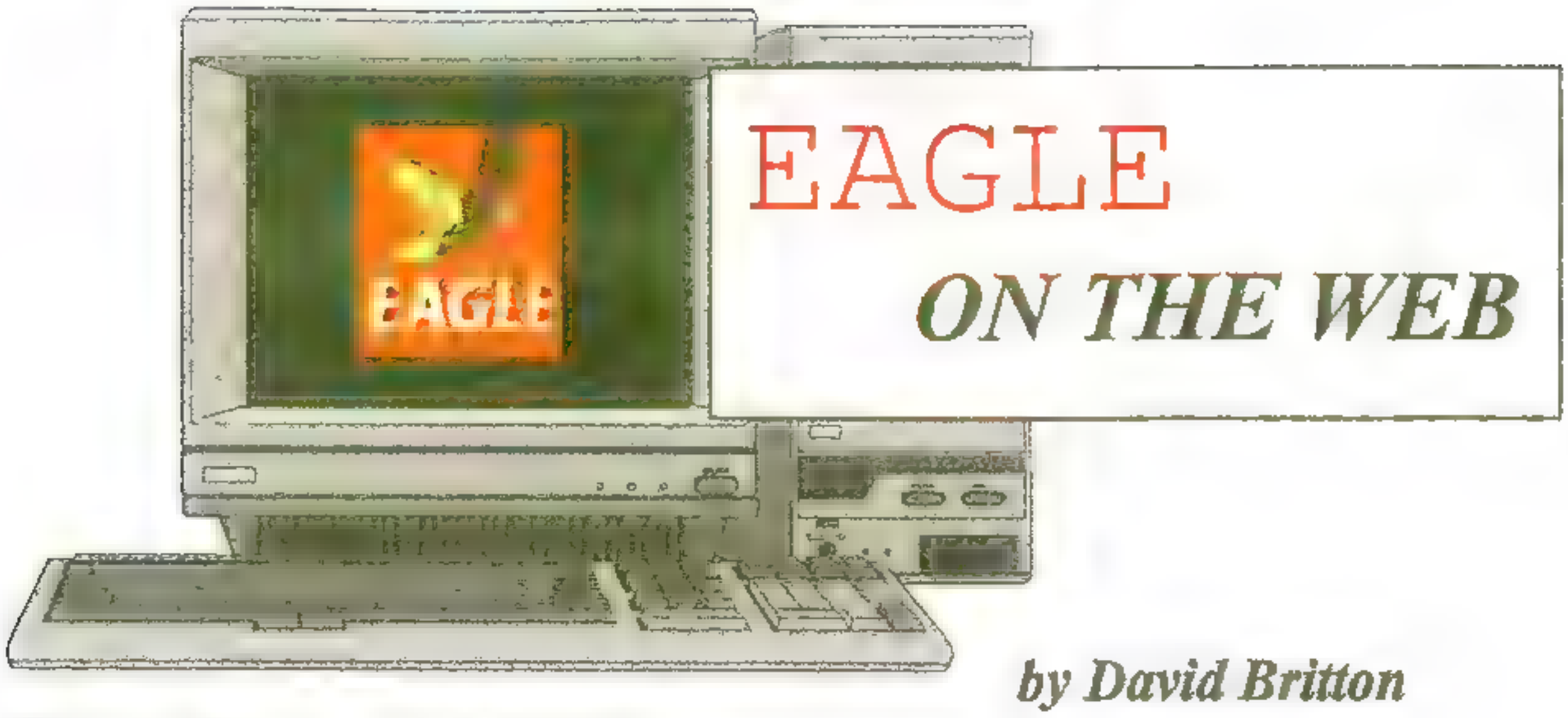
"Here,give me those scissors, Archie," Joan said impatiently. "You're all thumbs."

Archie meekly surrendered the scissors. "It's a tough job, all right," he admitted.

"You hold the bear ... now then-." Joan expertly snipped through the stitching with the skill of a professional seamstress. "There, that's got it. Now you hold him open while I pull out the stuffing".

Archie gaped in amazement at the amount of wood shavings that literally burst forth from the cavity, scattering all over the table.

continued



EAGLE
ON THE WEB

by David Britton

THE ART OF DAN DARE

For some time I had been toying with the idea of compiling a collection of favourite frames from Dan Dare stories. Everyone has his own personal favourites. I planned to create this from original artwork, rather than from the printed page. Some frames would have to come from the latter source, as I don't own nor do I have access to so many artboards. I discussed this with Peter Inns, as he has developed a very comprehensive web-site, and we had a match.
We have begun a process that will take some time, to put together such an archive.
You can find the embryonic site at: www.dan-dare.org

You will find the "Gallery" and the presentation "How the Dan Dare Studio Worked" on the Home Page. The presentation will be familiar to those who have visited one of our Eagle Exhibitions. I thought that not using the material would be a waste and is a good introduction to Eagle

We are very grateful to Terry Doyle who has been very active in supplying a number of images for the site. Eventually, it will be a chronological journey through the Dan Dare stories, with some personal recollections and contributions.

Speaking of Terry Doyle, another site well worth a visit is the one he has developed. It features rather more than just Eagle but is well worth looking at:
http://comicartfans.com/GalleryRoom.asp?GSub=2518

If artwork is your thing, then joining the Yahoo Dan Dare forum is for you. There is a wealth of material there, including many items of unpublished Frank Hampson work. The current membership has grown to 168.

What's it Worth?

At the moment it seems to be a bit of a buyer's market on e-bay. We still see some erratic prices but they appear to have come off the boil. Since the publication of Titan's Dan Dare, Hawk Books prices are softer, but I think this may only be a temporary phenomenon.

Any comments? Contact me: **davidbritton@compuserve.com**

Membership Update

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Ian Howard,15 Spital Green,Bolsover,Derbyshire. S44 6TP 01246 826299 Correction Tony O'Sullivan E Mail tony_osullivan2003@yahoo.co.uk

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CREDITS: Coupon via Joan Porter and her son, Michael; Photos: Paul Napp.

Who's who
No 35 – David Triggs

Born and educated in London in the 1950s, David first started reading *EAGLE* at about Volume 3, from which time it became an essential weekly event at home in Kingsbury and in the school playground in Harrow.

As with many of his schoolmates it was 'Dan Dare' that provided the most detail interest and re-reading value. It was, in retrospect, one of the major factors in directing him towards design in general and architecture in particular. He spent many hours tracing over the 'Dan Dare' strips showing "future" cities and eventually trying to draw whole page 1 and 2 episodes in colour to fill in episodes of 'Dan Dare' missing from his collection. Interesting to see later how his story line differed from the original, when he eventually completed his collection by purchase.

He went on to study architecture at the Regent Street Polytechnic, qualifying in 1972. He has worked as an architect ever since, both in England and in France, whilst also pursuing spare time interests in music, transport history,

The Youngest DAN DARE Studio Artist – part 2

AN ARTISAN'S CAREER

– with disruptions from Colonel Dare and incursions into Aviation Art

by Gerald Palmer

Following Adrian Perkins' introduction to Gerald Palmer – 'The Youngest Dan Dare Studio Artist' – in the previous issue of EAGLE TIMES, in this issue Gerald himself recollects and reflects on his career, including the time he spent working for Hulton Press and EAGLE.

1 – Origins and schooling

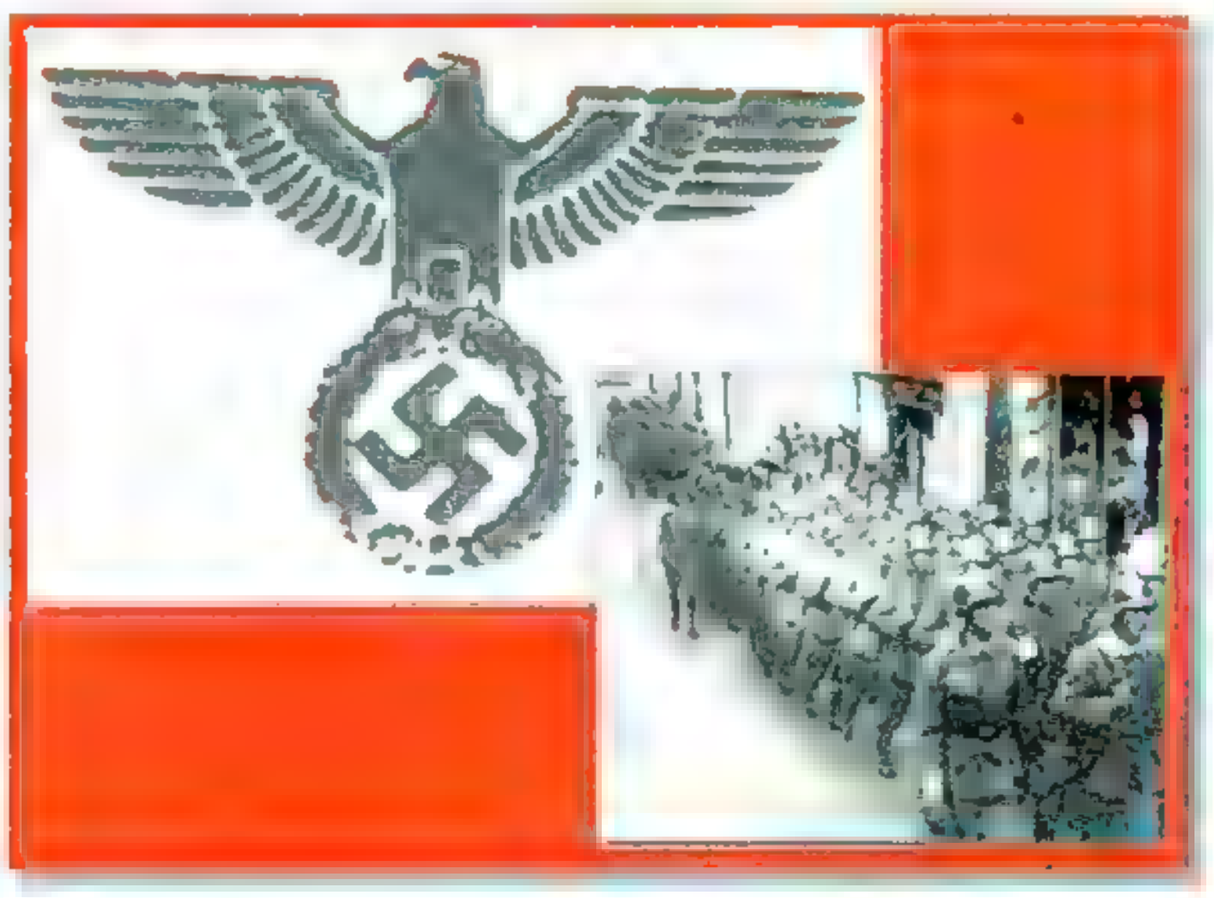
My father was a well-known Jersey watercolour artist, so it was perhaps not unnatural that I should be artistic also. Incidentally, he was one of the many male Channel Islanders who, during the German occupation, were put in prisoner-of-war camps there.

At school my headmaster encouraged my drawing ability, just as he encouraged other pupils to make the best use of their abilities. In my case this included an introduction and studio work with one of Jersey's best-known artists.

My headmaster and artist friends persuaded the authorities to stump up the fees to give me a formal art school training in England – at Portsmouth College of Art.

Formal art school training was very different in the early fifties as it involved a great many taught skills, whereas nowadays it seems to be left to chance to acquire the skills!

A picture by "one of Jersey's best-known artists" (Edmund Blampied)



The Channel Islands – under Nazi rule

2 – Looking for work

In August, 1955, I graduated from Portsmouth Art School with a National Diploma in Design and, with a portfolio mostly containing examples of my aviation art, I visited many potential employers in London's Fleet Street area. But it seemed that all of them automatically rejected young college graduates out of hand - because of lack of experience!

Eventually I obtained a position with Hulton Press as a staff artist drawing drop-in illustrations for most of their publications: five-bar gates for the *Farmers Weekly*, that type of thing.

The company had only recently moved into Hulton House in Fleet Street from offices all over central London.

The Farmers Weekly

3 - I join the *EAGLE*

I had first come across *EAGLE* at art college, where it was being used as an example of a style of commercial art. During 1957 I became formally attached to *EAGLE* after transferring within Hulton House and having an interview with Marcus Morris.

I really enjoyed the team spirit that Marcus had managed to evoke in the offices of *EAGLE* and, led by Ellen Vincent and Derek Lord, the staff were a really friendly group of people.

As staff artist, I was often asked to complete submitted artwork - bringing it up to the quality demanded in order to satisfy the standards set by my superiors: Art Editors Michael Gibson, Arthur Roberts and Charles Pocklington (in succession), as well as Derek Lord. I can still recall having to retouch several of the highly detailed centrespread paintings from Leslie Ashwell Wood.

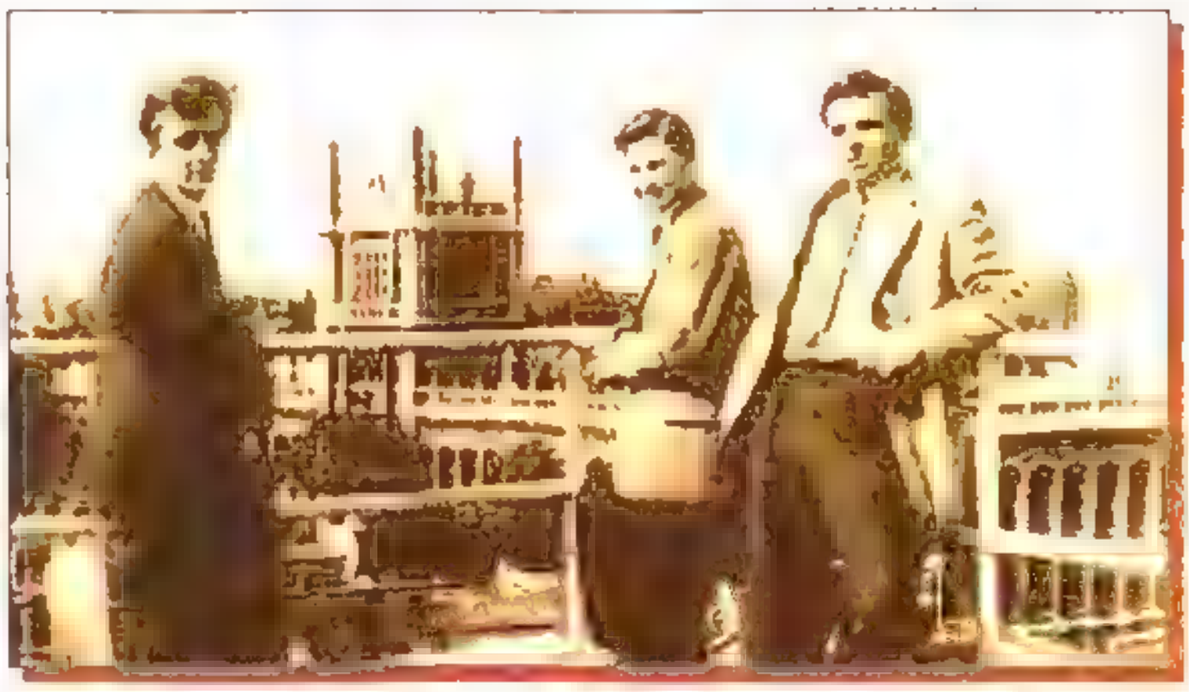
In addition I worked closely with the publication's lettering department, despite having lenses to combat an eyesight problem; fortunately early contact lenses helped solve that problem.

My colleagues and I participated in many amateur dramatics presentations, particularly at Christmas.

4 – Marcus Morris

When I had worked for several years I found myself in a strained financial position owing to a lack of pay rises. I decided to take Marcus at his word when he had interviewed me - that at any

Gerald (centre, front) and his Hulton House gang pose after rehearsals for the 1957 Christmas amateur dramatics production



Gerald (right) and two of his colleagues on the roof of Hulton House, 1957

time he would be available to discuss any work matter that concerned me. He immediately made time to see me. I explained to him my remuneration problem, and he subsequently arranged for me to have a salary increase within a short period.

Even now, I recall this personal intervention with gratitude. It was an example of Marcus's open-handedness, particularly when he was obviously a very busy chap, being a senior manager. Marcus had a very 'hands-on' approach to personnel management.

5 - I join Frank Hampson's studio

In mid-1958 I followed up a job advertised within Hultons: this was a position working for Frank Hampson in his Epsom studio, which was only a few miles away from my friends in central London. Living in Esher I would be able to commute - with two bus journeys - to work in Bayford Lodge.

Frank Hampson – "A hard taskmaster"

"Lots of stars in 'Safari in Space'"

6 - Working "9 to 5"

Frank Hampson proved to be a hard taskmaster; he had a habit of tearing up artwork that he considered substandard - not necessarily his own! The other artists were very upset when this happened and felt it was an example of perfectionism gone mad. But Frank was always concerned about the Colonel's depiction and set very high artwork quality standards.

Frank often asked me to stay working late but, being somewhat strong-willed, I refused as I had a very busy social life; and besides, it was in my contract that it was a nine-to-five job. Frank was in his early 40s and rarely argued with me; he had quite enough troubles. Indeed, it was not a happy

As requested I had shown Frank my portfolio of paintings and drawings comprising aircraft, locomotives and other vehicles. He must have been impressed, for he offered me a job which essentially was in replacement of that of Eric Eden, who had provided many of the space backgrounds and space vehicles.

I did some of the space backgrounds in 'Safari in Space', showing lots of stars!

Now 25 years old, I was accepted by Frank Hampson and, just like Eric, did no figure-work - until later, when I was working under control of Frank Bellamy (see the frames on this and the next page).

My colleagues included a very friendly studio manager, Joan Porter, who often had to pour oil on troubled waters.

DAN DARE
PILOT OF THE FUTURE
TERRA NOVA
MY PEOPLE ARE SAYING 'DE NAGRABS!'
LOOKS AS IF THEY'RE GETTING THEIR WISH!
DAN NAGRABS
THOSE THINGS COULD KILL A MAN WITH THEIR JAWS ALONE

Illustrated by Gerald Palmer – under Bellamy's direction

time for him or the people at Bayford Lodge, for rumours of disbandment of his studio were circulating.

7 – Changes

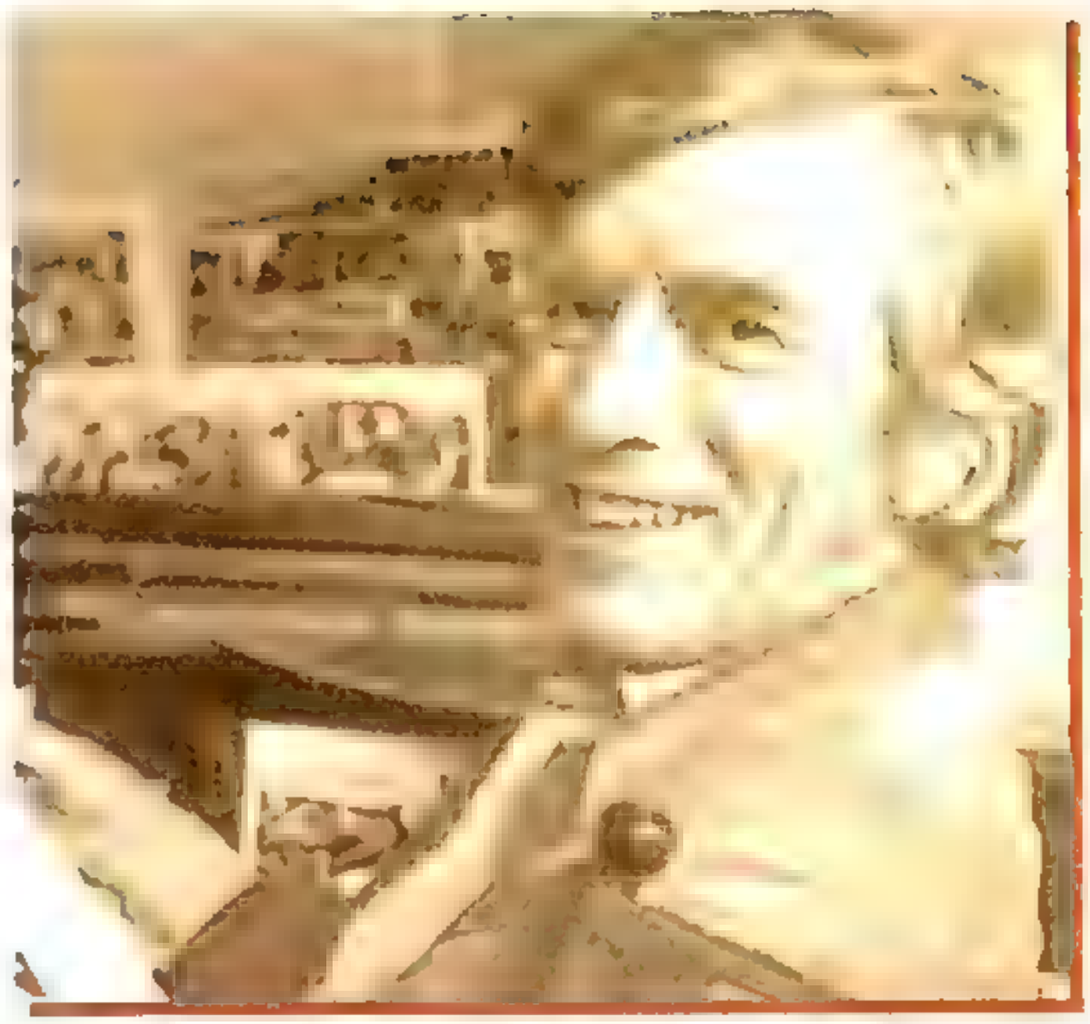
In the early spring 1959, Odhams Press bought Hulton Press, and renamed their Juveniles division Longacre Press. They began to influence operations at HQ. With a cost-cutting agenda, it looked like the end of the Bayford Lodge studio techniques to produce 'Dan Dare' and, just a couple of months after the purchase-contracts were signed, Odhams abandoned the system.

The new system was explained to the 'Dan Dare' artists. We would straightway move up to a room in Hulton House, and instead of Hampson we would be under the control of a newcomer to 'Dan Dare': the artist Frank Bellamy.

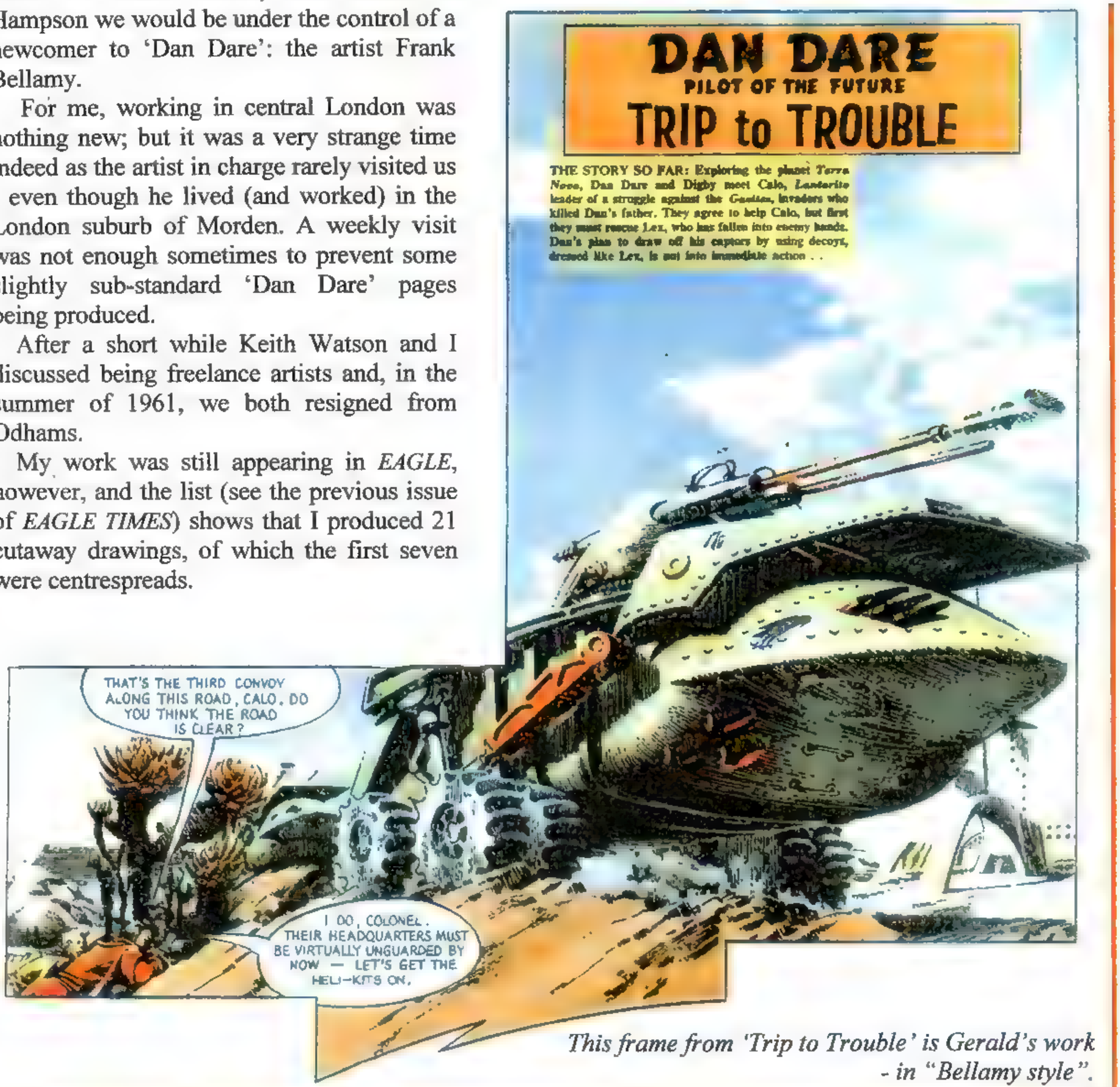
For me, working in central London was nothing new; but it was a very strange time indeed as the artist in charge rarely visited us - even though he lived (and worked) in the London suburb of Morden. A weekly visit was not enough sometimes to prevent some slightly sub-standard 'Dan Dare' pages being produced.

After a short while Keith Watson and I discussed being freelance artists and, in the summer of 1961, we both resigned from Odhams.

My work was still appearing in *EAGLE*, however, and the list (see the previous issue of *EAGLE TIMES*) shows that I produced 21 cutaway drawings, of which the first seven were centrespreads.



Frank Bellamy (photographed in the 1970s)


DAN DARE
PILOT OF THE FUTURE
TRIP to TROUBLE
THE STORY SO FAR: Exploring the planet Terra Nova, Dan Dare and Digby meet Calo, Lanterite leader of a struggle against the Gantian, invaders who killed Dan's father. They agree to help Calo, but first they must rescue Lex, who has fallen into enemy hands. Dan's plan to draw off his captors by using decoys, dressed like Lex, is put into immediate action . .
THAT'S THE THIRD CONVOY ALONG THIS ROAD, CALO. DO YOU THINK THE ROAD IS CLEAR?
I DO, COLONEL. THEIR HEADQUARTERS MUST BE VIRTUALLY UNGUARDED BY NOW — LET'S GET THE HELI-KITS ON.

This frame from 'Trip to Trouble' is Gerald's work - in "Bellamy style".

8 - An incident at Lotus and other recollections

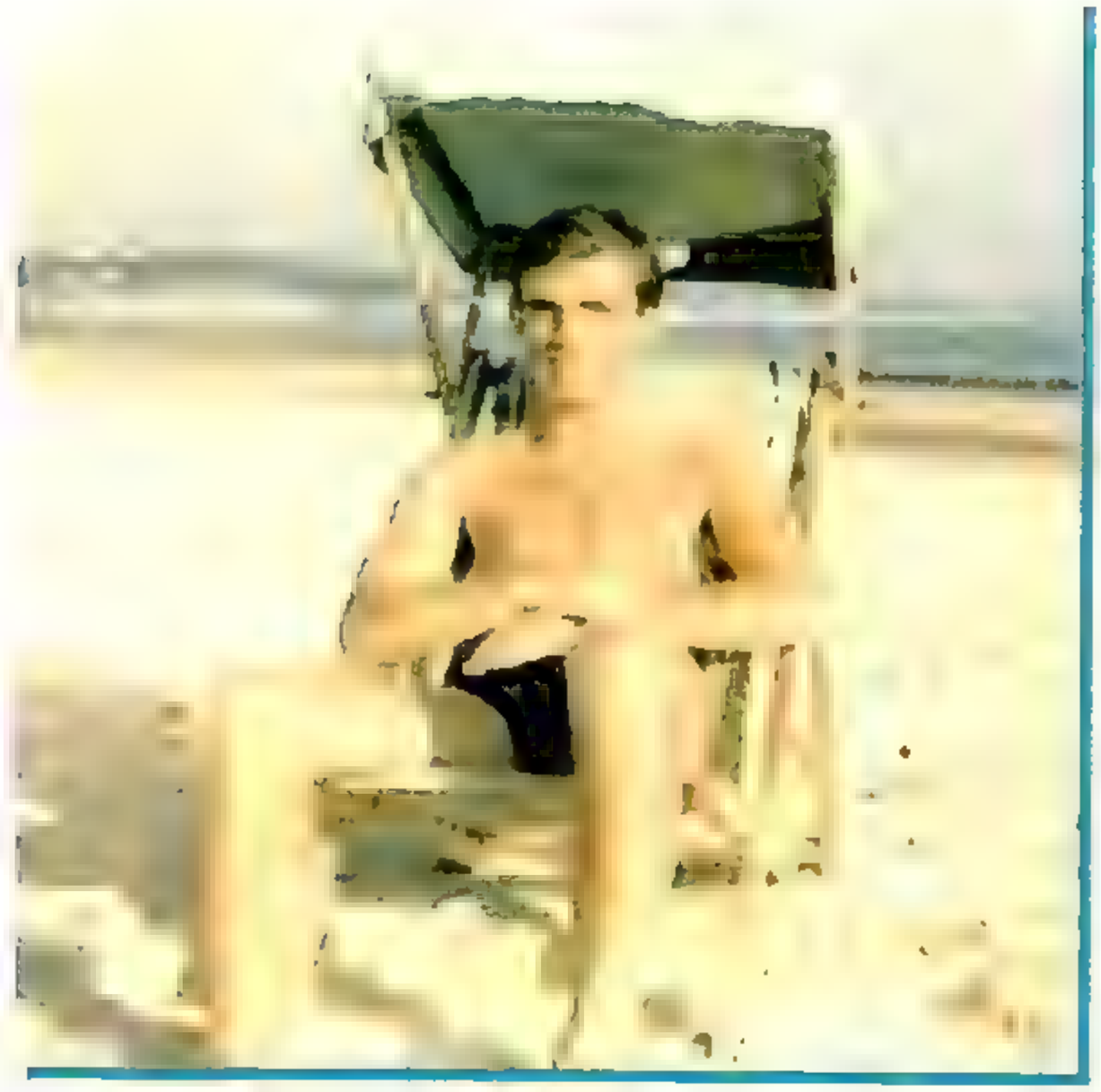
Although initially most of my paintings and 'cutaways' were commercially commissioned, several were painted whilst I was still in the employ of Odhams. Often preparation of these involved direct contact with the manufacturers in the collection of references. For example, along with Charles Pocklington I visited the Lotus car factory, accompanied by a Fleet Street photographer that Longacre had booked. We were lavishly treated by the publicity department and freely given all the information required for illustrating the Company's latest product - the Elite.

Unfortunately the photographer reverted to type and, seeking a pictorial scoop, roamed unsupervised around the factory and, finding a storage compound for several prototype cars, photographed them until he was discovered. The resulting furore amongst the Lotus management ended only when the three of us were escorted to the factory gate.

Charles had a great interest in cars. After *EAGLE* he worked in the editorial offices of Odhams motoring magazine before joining the drawing office of the Ford Motor Company.

On another occasion in the early 1960s, I was involved in illustrating a technical feature that mentioned a de Havilland aircraft and, with Charles Pocklington, I visited their Hatfield base.

Amongst the many people we were introduced to was John 'Cat's Eyes' Cunningham,



Gerald Palmer, back in Jersey in the 1960s

the famous night-fighter pilot and now the Company's chief test-pilot. When I met Cunningham, who was something of a national hero, he was very keen to be associated with us, as it turned out he was a great fan of 'Dan Dare'!

9 – Life now

Now, once again living in Jersey, I feel that my current success is, in a way, repaying the debt of confidence that my one-time headmaster and my artist friends had expressed in me all those years ago.

Gerald Palmer, as he is today – sculpting in one of his studios

Photograph © Jersey Evening Post

Having recently taken up sculpture, I believe that sculpting is but a continuation of the clay modelling skills we were taught at College. I have separate studios - geographically separated - for painting and sculpting.

Gerald Palmer

Gerald Palmer was talking to Adrian Perkins.

SOME EXAMPLES OF GERALD PALMER'S NON-EAGLE WORK

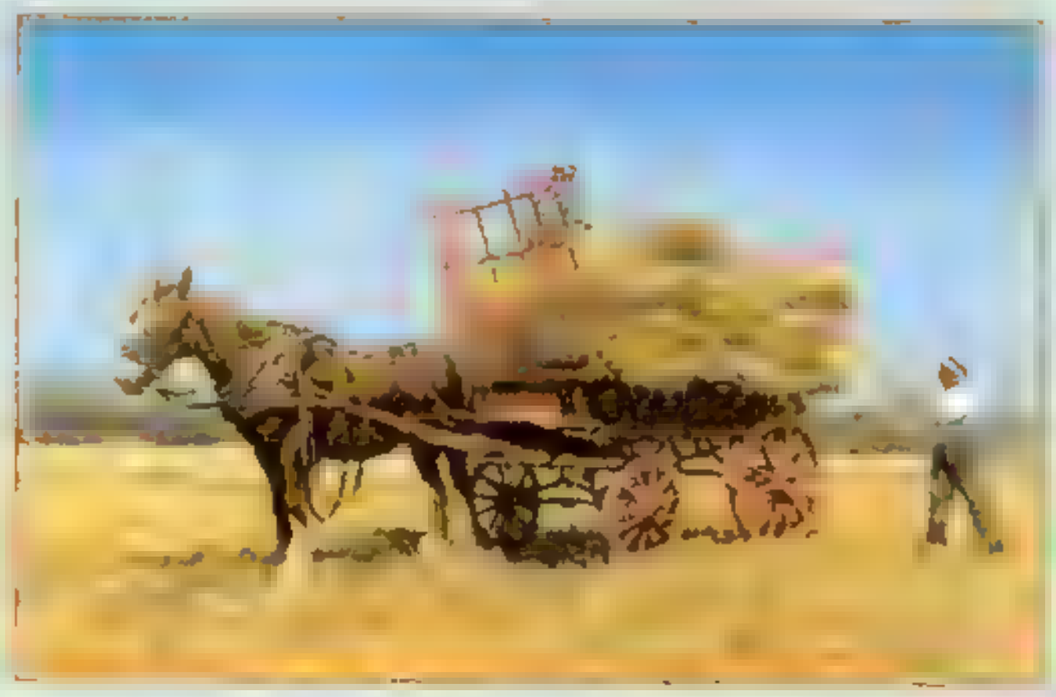
Gerald, and his wife Valerie, are currently involved with the charity 'Channel Islands Air Search' and to fundraise he has painted their Islander aircraft in operation (see right). This civil aircraft is probably equipped with the most sensitive radar available.

On this, and the next, page, are other examples of Gerald's recent work.

'Lion's Pride'

'The Cobbler'

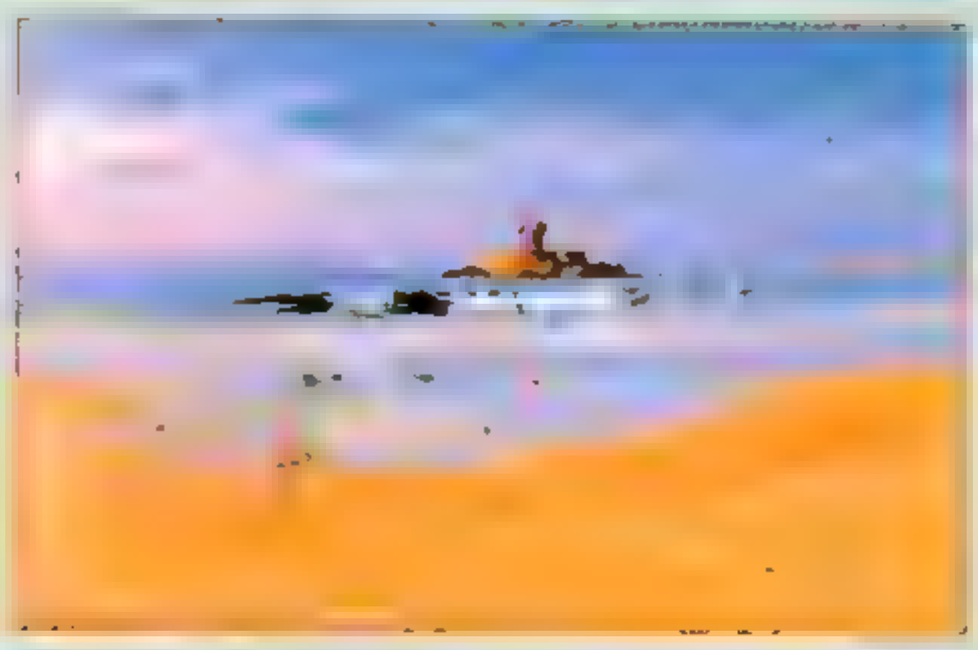
'A Perfect Day'



'Jersey Haycart'

'Spitfire'

'D.H. Heron winter maintenance'



'St Ouen's Bay'

Gerald Palmer, GAvA

Credits

Adrian Perkins wishes to acknowledge the help of Will Grenham in the preparation for publication of his two-part article on Gerald Palmer.

We would both like to thank Rob Currie (the photographer) and Peter Mourant (Picture Editor of the Jersey Evening Post) for permission to reproduce the photograph of Gerald in his studio.

Thanks also to Gerald Palmer for permission to reproduce some of his recent paintings, which are © the artist.

DAN DARE

PILOT OF THE FUTURE

VOYAGE TO VENUS PART 1

Dan Dare-*Pilot of the Future*

A review of the new Titan publication

After many months of promises, speculation and disappointment, the new publication, Dan Dare –Pilot of the Future by Titan Publishing Group hit the shelves on 1st July 2004.

The book, titled "Voyage to Venus Part 1",is the first of a two-part reprint of the untitled first Dan Dare story beginning on 14th April 1950. Printed from the original Hawk volumes, the frames have been enhanced both in colour and presentation with fold and crease lines removed. The format is smaller than either Hawk Books or the original comics measuring 31cms x 24 cms but,with the improvements in the modern print process, the overall effect is excellent. The book is bound in plain red cloth with gold lettering on the spine. The current version comes with a colourful dust-jacket in mainly red and white, featuring the traditional Dan Dare head against a circular background of frames of Theron fighters and one of the three shuttle spaceships from the first story, the Spacefleet logo and happily Frank Hampson's name. The traditional "tempest" font has been dropped and replaced by lettering that has more in common with the 30's than the 50's. The purpose behind these changes is to give the image fresh life and a new visual impact for a new generation of reader. If one is able to dispense with traditional mental images the effect is quite pleasing.

There were plans for an alternative cover, using unpublished "Frank Hampson" artwork. However, as some serious doubts have been cast over the provenance of the piece and whether Frank Hampson drew the image, Titan,very professionally, has postponed it until authenticity can be established.

There is an amusing and nostalgic introduction by illustrator Dave Gibbons. It attempts to put Eagle and Dan Dare into the context of the 1950's. It is well written and helps the modern reader to understand the significance of Eagle in the rather grey, utilitarian and rationed post-war Britain but overall I found it lost itself in its own interpretation of the "greyness" of the period.

The "Who's Who in Dan Dare" that follows introduces us colourfully to the characters.

The final introductory article "The Genesis of Dan Dare" written by Nick Jones is a well balanced, nicely illustrated, short synopsis of the creation and development of Dan Dare from his origin to his appearance in the modern CGI version.

The first part of the story (Vol. 1:1 – Vol. 1: 40) follows.

This edition concludes with a one-page tribute to Frank Hampson titled "Tomorrow Man" and a checklist of Dan Dare stories, script writers and artists. Unfortunately, there are some errors in this list. That is probably the only detraction from the book as a whole.

In conclusion, Titan should be congratulated for this reprint. It has reproduced the story in excellent colour (compared with the rather bluish, washed out versions one normally sees), given full credit to Frank Hampson, in a handy size and at a reasonable price. It retails at £15 but is available from Amazon at a discount (and is already being offered on e-bay).

The sales of this edition have been sufficient to justify considering a second print run. The release date for Part 2 has not yet been announced, but Amazon is accepting orders for Part 2 with "Red Moon Mystery" as a pair, at a discount, on release.

David Britton. ■

Anthony Buckeridge
1912 - 2004
by David Gould

Anthony Buckeridge

With the death of Anthony Buckeridge on 28th June at the great age of 92, another chapter of Eagle history closes. Although this splendid writer was best known for his stories of the denizens of Linbury Court Preparatory School, most Eaglers will probably share my liking for his equally funny Rex Milligan stories, which were specially commissioned for our favourite paper.

How did Anthony Buckeridge come to create the character Rex Milligan for Eagle? In the 5th October, 1951, issue the editor announced that this popular writer, already well known for his Jennings series on the BBC (Children's Hour), would be writing a series of stories especially for Eagle about Rex Milligan and his companions. Unlike Jennings and Darbishire, Milligan attended a day Grammar school. In a letter written to me on 20th February 1990, Mr Buckeridge explained:-

"I thought the Eagle was a splendid paper and the strip cartoons were excellent (Harris Tweed was a particular favourite of mine). On reading the earlier copies, however, I felt that the magazine was a bit short on good reading material, so I called on Marcus Morris to discuss a series - as distinct from a serial - which would appeal to readers as well as those who only wanted to enjoy their stories in cartoon form. That was how I came to write separate weekly stories about the Milligan character. Later on I used the characters for serials (actually only one serial) as I felt that, after 25 separate plots my invention might start to flag and I didn't want the standard to drop.

"So Milligan went on as a serial- also appearing on BBC TV in 1955/6 and also as four books published by Lutterworth and later Armada.

"Although Milligan books sold well, they were never as popular as Jennings. The stories about both characters were humorous and, personally, I always thought that Milligan was equally as funny as Jennings. Jennings' greater popularity may well have been due to the fact that he had the advantage of wider publicity as he started off on BBC Children's Hour and stayed for about 20 years."

"Rex Milligan's Busy Term". 1953

"Wow! What a chronic contraption!" I exclaimed. "You're not expecting Jigger and me to risk our lives in this, are you?"

The car pulled up a few yards past the bus stop . . .

"Jennings of Course"
Eagle 1964

Antnony Malcolm Buckeridge was born in North London on 20th June, 1912. In 1917 his father was sent to the Front near Arras and killed within half - an - hour of his arrival. The Bank Clerks' Orphanage paid to send Anthony to Seaford College boarding school, which did not teach any of the subjects that would have interested him, such as music, drama or art, and he was always hungry there. Later he took a degree at University College, London, and taught in preparatory schools.

During Word War II he was in the Auxiliary Fire Service at Northampton, where he remained until 1945. One of his colleagues was Victor Wilkins, father of our member Paul, who told me that when Buckeridge needed a name for one of his imaginary schoolmasters he used the surname of his former colleague.

After the War, Buckeridge taught at St Lawrence College,Ramsgate,at the same time writing plays for radio. Then came "Jennings Learns the Ropes" , the first play about Jennings, which was broadcast on 16th October, 1948. Most of the books that followed were adaptations of the radio plays.

Michael Wace has commented : "Buckeridge wrote carefully and well, and often with style; each hilarious episode takes the narrative forward with an expertise usually associated with more famous authors."

Jennings also appeared in The Childrens Newspaper and in the later Eagle, thanks to it s editor Bob Bartholomew, who commissioned four distinct serials, running,with gaps, from the 14th November,1964, to 3rd February 1968. They were very popular with readers and all appeared as books more or less concurrently.

Anthony Buckeridge certainly followed the advice that Mr Carter (the unflappable schoolmaster) gave to Jennings: to write about what you know. What Buckeridge knew was life in the closed community of a preparatory school, the workings of the 11-year-old mind, and fire brigades – which often made guest appearances in his books. And , although Buckeridge updated Jennings slightly in his final books, for me the character belongs firmly in the 1950s – and so does Rex Milligan. ■

The first story of the series ,"Introducing Rex Milligan", appeared in Eagle 12th October,1951, followed by 23 more short stories, the last being "Rex Milligan's Bath Chair Battle"(19th December, 1952.) Then came a 13 - part serial , "Rex Milligan's Busy Term", starting on 13th March 1953. Milligan short stories also appeared in annuals Nos 3 and 5.

A minor mystery : since Rex didn't seem to be Irish why did he have an Irish name? When writing to Anthony Buckeridge in 1990 I did ask him but he ignored the question. Perhaps, like Jennings, Milligan was a composite of several boys his creator had known. Buckeridge could be a bit cagey about the origins of his characters : there was a real Jennings but the author was most reluctant to admit that fact and still insisted that Diarmaid Jennings was not the model of the character.

Postbag.

Please send letters, sales and wants, and subsriptions to Keith Howard, 25A,Station Road,Harrow, HA1 2UA

Dear *EAGLE TIMES*

So perhaps it was all down to the Office Boy ...?

In one way or another, Friday the 13th of August 2004 turned out to be a pretty good day as far as I was concerned! The clear transparent packaging (used specifically so that thieving postal staff workers could see what was inside) had taken almost three weeks to the day to get to me. It was on that day that I received the replacement part for the faulty ball - valve in my upstairs water tank. Also neatly tucked within the packaging was the eagerly awaited Eagle Times Summer 2004 edition.

Having scanned its contents list, I'm sure I don't have to tell you that I immediately made a bee-line for Charlie Pocklington's somewhat amusing piece. This, of course, having been written in response to my own thought - provoking article of three months earlier ... the one that I had ominously entitled "Who Stabbed Frank in the Back?". (Ummmm, do I detect a similarity between this and the famous film in which Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon had so magnanimously starred?)

Two years ago when corresponding via my life-long chum Dan Lloyd, I had tried to get some in - depth response from Derek Lord as to what had happened at that time. But disappointingly when Dan came back to me, he said that as editorial persons, neither he nor Derek were privy to the machinations of the Art Department - and that neither of them knew the ins and outs of the Frank Hampson affair. Odd ..... for if Dan Lloyd (Chief Sub Editor for Eagle) and Derek Lord (Eagle's Editor) had no contact with Frank Hampson, and , going by his own admission in the "ET" 2004 summer issue, that Mr Pocklington (in charge of art) didn't have any contact either, then perhaps we should seek out the Office Boy and ask him. Maybe it was HE who had done all the commissioning of artwork ..... and, presumably, had ultimately carried out the final dirty and dastardly deed.

Now news of that nature really would be a turn - up for the books. Mr Pocklington has stated that my rambling article was poorly researched and he , I'm sure, is totally correct about that. But then, he probably hadn't realised that I now live on a tiny and remote island butting on to the edge of the Pacific Ocean,and that I have little more to amuse me than observing hordes of semi-naked natives running about in one direction or another (and have been doing so for more than eleven years).

Of course, another difficulty has been this: certain folk couldn't be bothered. By his own admission, it would seem that a certain person just could not spare a couple of hours of his precious time to give "a few hundred readers" a bit of pleasure (and perhaps put the facts straight at the same time,not that I'm all that sure they are correct even now).

The other main complainant of my piece has, in fact, produced a very fine book that purports to depict his life in autobiographical form. If the illustrative front cover is anything to go by, one could assume that amongst other things, much of the tome's content would feature his three-and-a- half years on Eagle magazine and perhaps at the same time solve the puzzle. But sadly, this is not so.

Dedicated Eagle readers will be disappointed (just as I was). For on reading it, one cannot fail to notice that out of the total of 242 pages, a massive one-quarter of the entire book details a blow - by - blow account of his 18- month spell of duty within the Army's Royal Engineers. As to the part of his life where he takes up the role of Eagle's editor - something that he quotes as being the happiest days of his life - this gets only a meagre six-and-a half sheets of A5 paper (and even. these has one - and - a-half sheets covering yet more holidays spent abroad. Hhmmm, just 10 pages dedicated to his life on Eagle ..... now I found that to be quite intriguing under the circumstances. There are some things that I am extremely poor at - one of these is being able to learn a foreign language. At school, when my headmaster Mr Freebairn -Smith tried to teach me Latin, at an end - of - year examination I achieved the pass mark of 1%.... and I'm quite certain I was given that high mark because I'd actually spelt my own name at the top of the page correctly! But as to recalling events that HAVE taken place and reciting what people have said virtually word-for -word, that has been my forte ..... despite what others might think (it's a proven fact that if you ask 15 witnesses of a road accident to describe what they saw, you are likely to come up with 15 variations of the same event).

I am delighted to take note that Mr Pocklington has at long last been stirred into the action of placing pen onto paper...but what a shame it was that he had to be lured out in this somewhat unconventional and controversial way. Come along Charles, now that you've got yourself going, wouldn't it be a pity if you let it all stop now. Yes, I was still chuckling to myself when I turned out the light in readiness for the night's sleep. It would be difficult to say as whether the 'hilarity' had been brought about by my having fixed the water tank's ball - valve at long last (from which water had been allowed to run incessantly for more than two months) or from having read Charlie's most amusing piece! Yup, I reckon that Friday the 13th WAS a pretty good day!

<u>ROGER (Never let the facts spoil a good story) PERRY</u> (Phillipines)

E.T. Thanks for the above Roger.End of round three! Seconds out for round four!

Dear Eagle Times,

During the mid fifties I served in the Royal Navy as a signalman. I still took Eagle – I had it posted to the ship I was on – HMS Coniston. To my surprise, I opened up my Eagle one week to find our ship in the centre cutaway drawn by Laurence Dunn.

Now signalmen don't usually talk to the Captain but on this occasion I boldly said "Excuse me Sir, but did you know our ship is featured as the centrespread cutaway in Eagle this week ?"

The Captain was pleased to know this and said " I'll have one sent over".

What I didn't think of was the fact that my Eagle was three weeks behind and when the captain received his it contained the current week's cutaway – a civil engineering project. He was not amused!

PETER FENDER (Romney, Kent)

Dear *EAGLE TIMES*,

Thank you for yet another "honorary" copy of *EAGLE TIMES*. Whatever happens to it, you and "the Team" should be congratulated on a fine and dedicated attempt to remind us all of how lucky we were to be around in the 50s and 60s.

Could you commend David Gould especially for the way his lettering has reached the best of professional standards.

Thinking of you all and hoping there will be some outlets for your talents and enthusiasm.

Yours,

JACK DANIEL (Battersea)

It would appear that the problem raised by David Britton in the Spring'04 issue of ET is not financial but that of finding suitable content for future issues.

Recently I acquired some early copies of ET (thanks Howard) and reading them for the first time made me realise how much blood, sweat and tears were expended in putting together the first few issues after the demise of EAGLE DAYS . Forgetting this determination would be an affront to those stalwarts who made it all happen and continue to produce a magazine 'sans pareil'. 'After all it's the magazine which cements us all together' - ET editorial Vol. 3 No. 4 - true then,true now.

To more concrete issues - isn't it time that the majority of readers (myself included!) got up off our collective bums and contributed something rather than relying on 'the old gang' doing all the work. Here are a few, perhaps naive suggestions in no particular order of preference;

1) Members' collections of *EAGLE*-related items including photos (Model Engineers Workshop do this and it's a popular feature) memorable 'bargain' finds and places to buy (other than ET inserts and e-bay!)

Repeats of some of the very early ET stuff but with the added attraction of colour (Dan Dare stamps, postcards etc) plus Astral features e.g. 4/1 July 1970, 4/2 Aug 1970, 4/3 Dec 1970. I don't have any Astrals at all although I have read about them, and would like to see the Mark II versions.

3) Themed L. Ashwell Woods cutaways e.g. Aircraft (or is there a copyright problem here?) On this subject, gentlemen,has anyone ever done an inventory of his works as they appeared in *EAGLE* Vol.1 No.1? If so,copy would be nice as I missed the original!

If push comes to shove and draconian measures are required to keep ET alive then I, personally would accept an increase in the subscription of up to 50% (to fund any copyright payments) and a reduction in the number produced per year from four to two or three.

Yours faithfully,

BOB COOKE (Sheffield)

(Dear Howard), I read with some concern David Britton's article "The Bottom Line". It would indeed be a shame if *EAGLE TIMES* has to go the way of the original *EAGLE* and close down. No doubt you are feeling the strain yourself after editing the mag. for so many years. ▷

☆More 'Bottom Line' responses, some of which should have made the last issue.☆

◁I'm sure you don't need me to tell you that *EAGLE* wasn't just Dan Dare. For example we could do more 'Luck of the Legion' or the true-life stories from *EAGLE*'s back page.

How about features on some of the later characters like 'Blackbow' or 'Heros the Spartan'? Then there could be articles on the half-page features ie the nature articles by John Dyke, Lawrence of Arabia in *EAGLE* and so on.

Just a few ideas for you to be thinking about.

That's all for now.

ANDREW COFFEY (Great Yarmouth)

With regard to the future would it be an idea to broaden the scope of the magazine to include more on the 1950 s way of life? After all, the magazine is called the ***EAGLE TIMES*** - playing on the word 'Times'. One could include historical events, life at home, books, films, radio music etc.

Another idea I had - I'm sure there are members who joined after the publication of *EAGLE TIMES* Vol. 1, No 1. I believe there were *EAGLE* publications prior to that date - Astral Times I think. Would it be possible to reproduce articles from these if this hasn't been done already?

Yours sincerely,

STEPHEN BENZ (Polegate, East Sussex)

I became a member of E.S. seven years ago - at the start of Volume 10. I must admit that over the years I have found that reading E.T. has become quicker, i.e. there is less to personally interest me. I have recently subscribed to Rod Barzilay's excellent Spaceship Away , though I do have some doubts how this publication will survive when his excellent artwork is published up to date.

As regards E.T. I am first and foremost a Dan Dare fan though articles on other strips are appreciated - an especial favourite was always 'Luck of the Legion'. In the latest issues the articles on Thelwell , Press-out Books, Rivals of Dan Dare , 'Who Stabbed Frank in the Back?', The Harris Tweed Appreciation Society (though this can only remain fresh for a few issues) plus 'EAGLE on the Web' and letters, Sales & Wants were appreciated.

What, as David Britton's article suggests,I really miss is more on Dan Dare. I have bought the reprint issues - but Volumes 6 - 9 are unobtainable. (They can sell very well under 'Dan Dare' on E Bay - may be a way for the Society to dispose lucratively of surplus issues).

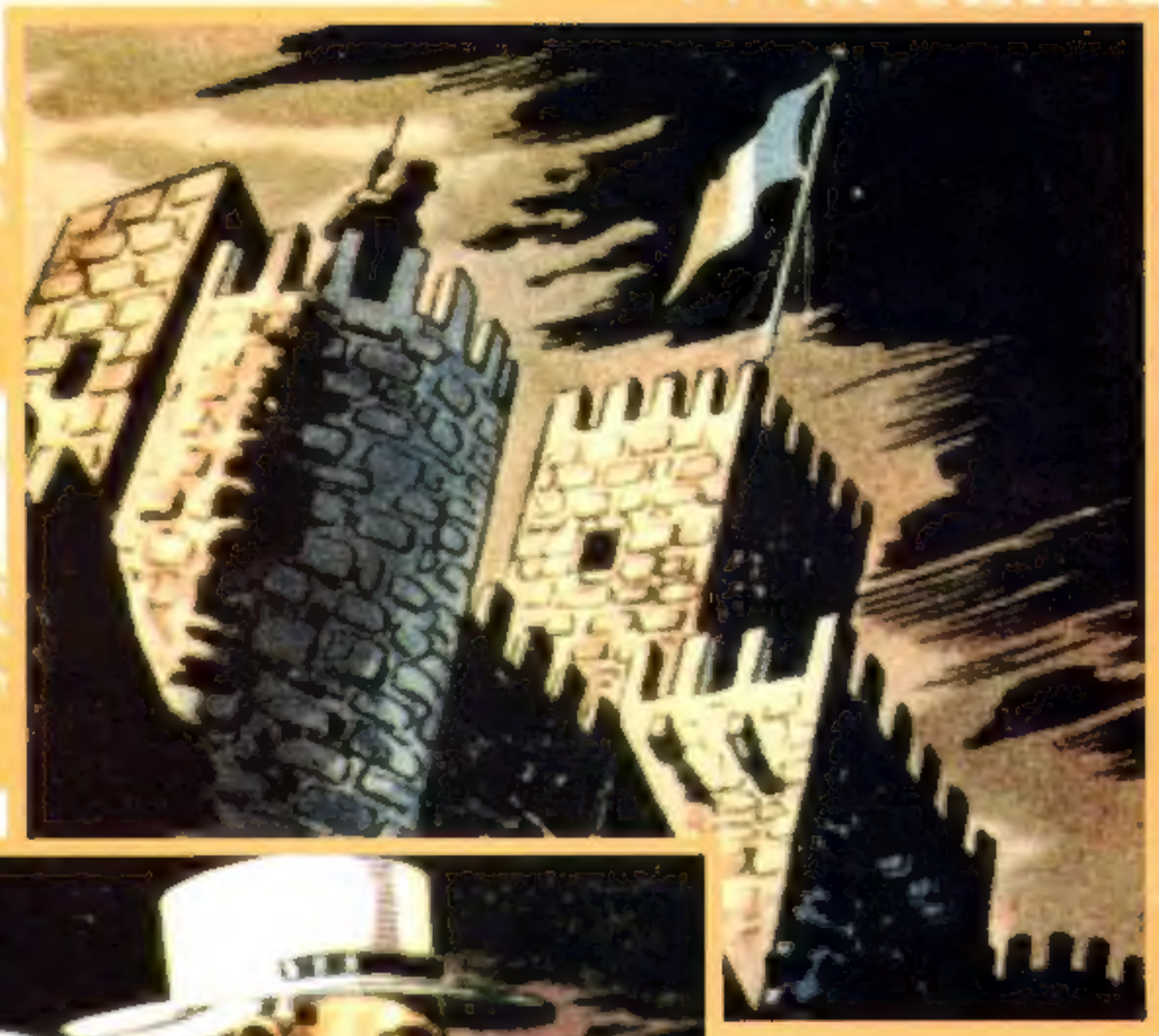
There are also I am sure articles from earlier fanzines of the 'Astral' nature which are also unobtainable which could be reprinted - or if there are copyrights - rewritten and reprinted. Unfortunately I have never managed to attend any of the E.S. weekends - again nuggets of information from guests could be printed for the wider membership.

I realise E .T. has to cater for many tastes within E.S. but to retain people like me more studies of substance on Dan Dare are required - otherwise unobtainable reprints are quite acceptable. I would not wish to see members' own attempts at D.D. stories - the few I have seen would not pass muster with F.H. I am sure.

I very much appreciate the efforts and time of the team in compiling E.T. My comments are only intended as pointers to the Future. Thanks again for your efforts.

Best wishes,

DAVID COLLET (Norwich)



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Geoffrey Bond's

LUCK OF THE LEGION

The Phantom Riders